

## Eternal

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# Eternal

by [TonightNoPoetryWillServe](#)

## Summary

Mob!boss Spock finally has a preliminary bond with Jim, but he still needs to convince Jim to be his forever--and to take his rightful place as Spock's right hand man. Meanwhile, threats arise from enemies old and new. Set in the 1930s, on a planet where Romulus, Vulcan, and Qo'noS are different countries.

A note on the non-con and underage tags: this refers to things that happened offscreen, in the past, and not between Jim/Spock, but rereading this again I think the tags are warranted! There is also attempted non-con on screen.

# Chapter 1

## Chapter Summary

Sooo I was planning to write a one-shot in this verse but instead this has turned into another chapter fic. Whoops! I don't want to give too many details here of what has happened in the series thus far (as I hope you'll go back and read it!) but new readers should know: Mob boss!Spock fell for exotic dancer/sex worker!Jim, and the two now live together and share a preliminary bond. Jim has taken care of Tom and Kevin since the three of them ran away from the Tarsus orphanage, so they live with the couple as well.

Jim awoke wrapped in Vulcan limbs. Spock was curled against his back, arm draped around his waist, legs tangled with his. He took a few moments to simply luxuriate in how right it felt to be wrapped up in Spock, warm and safe, before gently pulling away—

—Only to have Spock pull him back. “Where are you going?” Spock murmured into the back of his neck.

“Spock, c’mon, I’m getting up.” He tried again, but Spock did not release his hold, keeping one arm firmly around him and letting the other wander over his body, leaving fire in its wake. Jim could feel lust bubbling up in the back of his brain—lust that was not his own. It was still so bizarre that he could feel Spock’s emotions through their bond, but aside from the obvious benefits like the bond helping them communicate in emergencies, it also felt so good to share pleasure this way.

“Mmm, I see no reason to let you go.”

Jim huffed, amused. “It’s Tom and Kevin’s first day of school.”

“Is T’Pol not driving them?”

“Yeah, but I want to have breakfast and ride along. They’re a little nervous. They’ve never been to a fancy private school before.”

Spock’s hand stilled. “You sound as if you wish you could join them.”

“I never got to go to school,” Jim admitted quietly, feeling strangely vulnerable even though Spock must surely be aware that he didn’t have any formal education. He read as much as he possibly could, but the orphanage hadn’t sent them to school, and the years since had all been about survival and taking care of Tom and Kevin.

Long Vulcan fingers stroked the skin of his stomach. “I regret that you have had so few opportunities.”

“At least it’ll be different for Tom and Kevin. And now I have your amazing library. It’s going to take me a long time to work through everything in there.”

“If there are more books you wish for, Jim, you have only to ask. I cannot rewrite your past, but I would give you anything that was in my power.”

It wasn’t the first time the Vulcan had expressed similar sentiments, but it still amazed Jim that he had someone in his life who said things like that—and meant it. He turned in Spock’s arms to kiss him, languid and slow. Spock pulled him closer, their bodies flush together, and Jim could feel the hard length of his cock.

“I want you,” Spock murmured.

“I’m aware,” Jim replied, pushing Spock’s shoulder so that he was lying on his back. Dark eyes tracked Jim as he shifted down the Vulcan’s body, pulling down his pajama pants to release the long green cock. Jim kept his eyes locked with Spock’s as he licked a stripe up the underside. Spock shuddered slightly, eyes darkening with lust as Jim wrapped his lips around the head, teasing with his tongue.

“Jim,” Spock whispered, reverent. Pleasure coursed into him through their bond as he sunk down, taking all of Spock in his mouth. Spock’s eyes stayed locked on him as he bobbed up and down, swirling with his tongue, hollowing out his cheeks. He wrapped a hand around the base, twisting in time with the movements of his mouth. He knew precisely how to please the Vulcan—had known it even before he could literally feel how good it was for Spock through their telepathic link.

It didn’t take long until Spock was coming in his mouth with a low moan. Jim sucked him through it, keeping his eyes locked with Spock’s.

“You are perfection,” Spock whispered.

Jim smiled and slowly disengaged, kissing the head before pulling away and standing up, relishing the way Spock’s eyes still followed him.

“Will you be here when I get back from dropping off the kids?”

“No. I will be gone much of the day. I am arbitrating a disagreement between the Klingons and the Romulans.”

Jim paused in pulling on his pants and blinked at Spock. The Vulcan rarely mentioned any of the specifics of what he did—and while Jim knew the House of Surak was the most powerful extralegal force in the city, he didn’t know Spock had that much power over the House of Kahless or the House of Karzan. “I didn’t know you dealt with disagreements between them...”

“They recognize the supremacy of the House of Surak. In any case, any agreement they came to would not be valid without my approval.”

“What are they arguing over?” Jim asked before he could think better of it.

“Territory. There is a manufacturing center run by the Romulans that primarily employs Klingons. The Klingons therefore believe it should belong to them. The Romulans disagree.”

“And what do you think?”

“Neither is being completely unreasonable.”

“So, you’re looking for a compromise.”

Spock’s eyes gleamed with something like satisfaction. “Precisely. There is something else at play, however. A new group has arrived from Romulus. I must be certain they understand that there are limits to how much power they will have here.”

Jim nodded, a little surprised—and frankly wary—that Spock was sharing all this. But the most important thing on his mind was: “Be careful.”

The corner of Spock’s mouth tilted upward in a small smile. “Are you worried for me?”

Jim blushed and finished pulling on his pants. “Maybe.”

“This pleases me.”

“Mm and here I thought me sucking you off pleased you.”

“It did,” Spock replied, standing and coming to cup Jim’s face in his hands, his thumb running across Jim’s cheekbone. “I wish I could take you back to bed.”

Jim chuckled. “Spock, we just—”

The Vulcan cut him off with a deep, toe-curling kiss, which Jim decided was way more important than further discussion.

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When Spock finally arrived home, it was already late. Amanda told him that Jim was putting the children to bed, so he went to their room to see Jim lying between them, reading a story. He paused in the doorway to enjoy the sight of his beautiful bondmate and the children he had taken responsibility for—children who were now Spock’s responsibility as well.

“Hey,” Jim said, flashing him a smile.

“Good evening. How was your first day?” he asked the children.

“It was good, though nobody believed that I live with Vulcans,” Tom replied. “It doesn’t matter though. I like living here.”

“Me too,” Kevin chimed in.

Spock was inordinately pleased by this pronouncement. He knew how important the children were to Jim; their approval meant a great deal.

“I’m glad,” Jim said, squeezing them. It struck Spock that Jim had so often been on edge, on guard, that it was a rare and pleasant sight to see him so relaxed.

“Spock, can you stay for the rest of the story?” Kevin asked.

“Of course,” Spock replied. He sat in the chair beside the bed as Jim read, letting Jim's contentment wash over him through the bond. After the story, Jim kissed them each goodnight, and Spock granted Kev's request for a goodnight hug. Then they slipped out and down the hall to their bedroom, Jim's hand reaching over to tangle with his, the touch sending a thrill of sensation through him.

“I’m glad you’re back,” Jim said quietly. “Did it go okay?”

“Yes. Were you worried?” Spock asked, somewhat amused.

“Well...” Jim's gaze dropped. “I was paying attention through the bond just in case. I figured I'd feel it if something went wrong.”

The words delighted him—not merely that Jim was concerned for him, but that he was actively using the bond to monitor Spock's wellbeing.

“You like that, don't you?” Jim asked, voice dropping to a more playful register. “You like it when I use our bond.”

“I do,” Spock confirmed, reaching out to wrap his arms around Jim and reel him in. “It gives me great pleasure.”

“Mmm speaking of pleasure...”

Spock's hand reached around to squeeze Jim's ass, driving a soft moan from the human.

“Fuck, Spock...”

“That is my intention.”

Jim laughed and kissed him.

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Summary

Thanks for reading - I'm pumped to be writing this verse again!

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Spock was busy with work. The children were at school. For the first time in as long as he could remember, Jim had no responsibilities. He had spent so long just trying to survive, trying to provide for Tom and Kevin, that he didn't entirely know what to do with himself now that they were all safe and taken care of.

The first month or so of living at Spock's had been a desperately needed respite, but strange as it was to admit, Jim was getting a little restless. There was only so much time he could spend reading in the library.

Spock's insistence that he never venture out of the compound alone was mildly annoying, but after everything that had happened with Sybok, Jim couldn't entirely blame him. It certainly made him feel better that there were guards surreptitiously watching the kids' school.

As he wandered the grounds, mulling over exactly what he should be doing with his time, he caught sight of something that stopped him in his tracks. Two Vulcans were sparring on the main green, their movements rapid and artful. He recognized one of them as Vorik, whom he'd taken an immediate liking to since the Vulcan had nearly died helping to rescue him.

Vorik was smaller than his opponent, but clearly a more skilled fighter. He watched Vorik expertly dodge blow after blow before throwing the other Vulcan to the ground. After a short while, Vorik's opponent left.

Jim approached and gave a little wave. "Hey."

"Greetings, Jim. I hope you are well this morning."

"I'm fine. How about you? What were you doing?"

"We were practicing the Vulcan martial art of Suus Mahna. While modern weaponry is more frequently used, it is critical that we remain adept at hand-to-hand combat."

Jim had been in his share of fights, but he preferred other methods of resolving conflict and certainly didn't consider himself a particularly skilled fighter. But the idea of being able to actually defend himself, and Tom and Kevin? It was certainly appealing, and as soon as the idea struck he found himself asking, "Would, uh... would you teach me?"

Vorik tilted his head, considering. “I am uncertain if Spock would approve.”

Jim rolled his eyes. “It’s not up to him.”

One eyebrow arched, and Jim fought the blush creeping up his cheeks, but he stood his ground. He’d agreed to be Spock’s partner, not his property. “If there’s a problem, it’s on me, promise. I’m asking, not you. If you don’t have time or don’t want to, that’s fine, but don’t say no because you’re afraid of what Spock will think.”

Vorik’s expression shifted slightly, almost a smile. “I do not object to instructing you, though I must warn you that Suus Mahna takes many years to master.”

Jim shrugged. “I’ve got time.”

“If you are certain, then let us begin...”

Vorik started by guiding him through some of the basic forms. It was a different way of moving than he was used to, but he was starting to get the hang of it.

“Your stance is off. Like this,” Vorik said, setting his hands on Jim’s arm and back to adjust him.

Spock’s voice burst into his mind: “*Who is touching you?!?*”

“*It’s just Vorik. He’s teaching me Suus Mahna.*”

“*I see...*”

“*Good, now I need to concentrate.*”

Jim refocused on what he was doing, pleased when Spock said nothing more. It was an hour later, and he felt bruised and sweaty, when he heard Spock’s voice again: “*Jim, come to my office.*”

It wasn’t uncommon for Spock to call for him through the bond, though he rarely did so during the day. After thanking Vorik for his time—and exacting a promise to train again the next day—Jim went to the office and knocked on the closed door.

It opened to reveal a police officer.

Jim’s lips parted on a silent gasp and he resisted the urge to take a step back. But the officer smiled warmly and made room for him to come inside, which he reluctantly did. “Hello there, you must be Jim.”

“Uh, yeah.”

“Jim, this is Chief of Police Hikaru Sulu.”

“At your service,” Sulu said, holding out his hand to shake Jim’s.



Spock's eyes narrowed slightly as they shook hands, and Jim quickly pulled his away.

"Should you ever have any difficulties with the police, you should ask to speak with Chief Sulu."

It hit Jim again just how powerful his bondmate truly was. And the idea that the police would do a damn thing for Jim? It was so bizarre that he actually felt a little shaky. Unbidden, images of previous encounters with police officers flitted through his mind; he forced them away and managed a quiet, "Thank you."

"Truly my pleasure," Sulu replied. "Mr. Spock, please do let me know if there's anything else I can do for you, anything at all."

Spock inclined his head in acknowledgement, and a few moments later T'Pring was there to escort the Chief out.

Jim sat down heavily in one of the chairs.

The Vulcan probably didn't even need the bond to know Jim was uneasy. "What is wrong?"

Jim tried to shake the feeling and instead asked, "Nothing. What was he here for?"

"He also has concerns about the new Romulan presence in town... Jim, tell me what is troubling you."

Of course Spock wasn't going to let it go. Jim's eyes dropped to his lap. "It's just crazy to me to think that the Chief of Police would do anything for me. I've gone to the police before, begging for them to help, and... they didn't."

He could feel Spock's concern through the bond. "Why did you approach the police previously?"

"It doesn't matter, Spock."

"Jim, if someone has hurt you—"

His gaze rose to meet Spock's. "That's just it, though. I don't need you getting revenge for me, remember?"

"I have promised not to do so without your agreement." Spock sounded as if he regretted having made such a promise.

"I appreciate that you want to help, but I'm okay, really."

Spock walked around the desk to cup Jim's face in his hands. His voice was gentle as he said, "I wish that I could undo the harm that has been done to you, but no one will hurt you again."

Jim's breath caught in his throat at the words, at the feelings of warmth and comfort that flooded him through the bond. He stood and leaned into Spock's embrace. Through their connection he could feel Spock's affection, his fierce protectiveness, and his curiosity.

He welcomed Spock's presence in his mind, but that didn't mean he was ready for Spock to know everything he had been through. "Spock, I like our bond, I really do, but... I need to know I can keep my thoughts private if I want to."

Spock went still, and Jim instantly knew there was a way. "I do not like the idea of shields between us," came the soft reply.

"But you'll still teach me how?"

"I will," the Vulcan conceded, shifting so he could sit down and pull Jim into his lap.

"Thank you," Jim whispered, burying his face in Spock's neck. For a long moment, they just held each other. Finally he asked, "Why is the Chief of Police willing to do anything you want?" There was a time when he wouldn't have dared to ask the question, but Spock had been more open about his dealings lately.

"It is in his interests to do so."

"But... why?"

"Do you know the origins of the House of Surak?"

Jim pulled back slightly so he could look at Spock's face, and shook his head.

"When Vulcans first came here, how do you think we were treated?"

"I'm guessing not very well."

"Correct. We were frequently met with violence, and most job opportunities were not open to us. That is why Surak formed this organization: to care for the Vulcans who lived among humans, and to ensure that they could provide for their families. Legal avenues of employment were not open to us, so he sought illegal ones."

Jim digested this information. "And it was the same for the Romulans and the Klingons?"

"Though the circumstances varied slightly, that is essentially correct. Surak originally had a contentious relationship with the police, but soon held enough power that they decided to cooperate with him, rather than combat him. We have a similar understanding today."

"You pretty much run the whole city, then?"

"Power is shared, but it was hard-won and will not be easily surrendered. I will do what I think necessary to preserve the House of Surak—and those I care for. That includes you, Jim. Everything I do is in part to ensure that you will always have everything you need and will be safe from harm."

Spock gave him a soft kiss and Jim automatically melted into the touch.

"Any more questions?" Spock murmured.

A part of him wanted to know more, but he wasn't sure how much he was ready for at the moment. He didn't object to the fact that Spock's business was outside the law, but he still didn't understand all that that business entailed. And if he was honest with himself, he was a little afraid of it.

So he shook his head and kissed Spock again.

When their lips parted, Spock asked, "Now, what is this about you learning Suus Mahna?"

"I want to be able to defend myself—and those *I* care about. Surely you can understand that?"

"I can, but why not ask me to teach you?"

"Well, it wasn't exactly planned. I just saw Vorik practicing. And I know you could, but you have a lot of other responsibilities. I can't rely on you for *everything*."

"I would have no objection if you did."

"I know, but... this is a good thing. And you trust me, right? And Vorik?"

"I do."

"Then there's nothing to worry about."

For a moment, Spock's gaze searched his, and then he nodded. "Very well."

Jim grinned, and went back to kissing him.

## Chapter End Notes

Not sure if I'll be able to get a chapter up next week, but if not then definitely the week after!

## Chapter 3

### Chapter Summary

Sooo this chapter was not part of my plan for this fic, but I wanted to deal a little more with Jim's education before I move on to other things that are happening in this fic! A lot of this chapter was inspired by Mami94 – thank you so much!!

Jim was reading in the library when Spock found him. Just the sight of him made Jim feel warm. He generally tried not to think too hard about the fact that Spock wanted them to be bonded forever, but he couldn't deny to himself anymore that he cared about the Vulcan a hell of a lot, or that he enjoyed being with him.

Or, for that matter, that he liked their bond. He could feel something like excitement coming from the Vulcan as he sat beside Jim and leaned in for a kiss. Jim returned it eagerly.

"Jim," Spock whispered, the bond buzzing with warmth as they touched, strong Vulcan arms wrapping around him.

Jim melted into his touch, wanting nothing more than to continue, but Spock pulled back slightly. "You are far too distracting, but I came here to speak with you."

Laughing, Jim leaned back against the couch. "What about?"

"You told me you regretted not being able to attend school."

Jim blinked, a little caught off guard by the comment. "Yes?"

"My mother is extremely well-educated, and would be pleased to serve as a tutor in any subjects you wish to learn. If you desire education beyond her areas of knowledge, I will hire additional tutors."

Jim was completely floored. Spock had already transformed his life, providing him and the kids with safety and security, putting Tom and Kevin on the path to a brighter future, and making it so he'd never again have to give his body to men he didn't want for money.

And now this. It was beyond anything he'd ever thought he could have. "Really?" he whispered breathlessly.

"Of course. I am only sorry I did not think of it earlier."

"Thank you," he whispered, eyes flooding with happy tears. He kissed Spock passionately, pouring all his gratitude and affection into their physical and mental touch. "Thank you so much. Spock, I—I never thought I could have that. Not ever."

“I want you to have everything, Jim, everything you could wish for. My mother is happy to start working with you tomorrow, if you wish.”

“I’d love that.”

The force of Spock’s affection surrounded him, and long Vulcan fingers splayed against his face, a question in Spock’s eyes.

“Do it,” Jim whispered, and their minds rushed together.

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Jim was exhausted. He’d spent most of the day studying with Amanda, and then a few hours training with Vorik. Neither was taking it easy on him, and he felt mentally and physically exhausted. But he also felt *amazing*. He’d been working with Amanda for a few weeks, and it was incredible how much more progress he was making now that he had a guide. He was also rapidly improving at Suus Mahna. Vorik definitely wasn’t using his full strength against Jim, but they were actually sparring now.

He stayed in the shower a little longer than strictly necessary, letting the hot water ease his sore muscles, before toweling off and wrapping himself in a bathrobe.

Spock was in their bedroom, sitting on the bed.

“Hey, how was your day?” Jim greeted as he approached the Vulcan. He knew Spock had been meeting with the Klingons and Romulans again today. He did so regularly, but things had been unusually tense recently. Spock’s arms wound around him.

“Much improved now,” Spock whispered against his lips, before kissing and nipping his way along Jim’s jaw. Jim leaned into the touch as Spock’s clever hands undid the sash of his robe and eased it off his shoulders. Spock kissed his way slowly along the curve of Jim’s neck and shoulder—right against a bruise that was blossoming there. He let out an involuntary hiss, and Spock pulled back.

The Vulcan stared at his shoulder and then pushed his robe the rest of the way off, eyes roaming over Jim’s body.

“Spock—” Jim began.

“You are injured,” Spock rasped.

“It’s nothing,” Jim protested, but Spock’s anger pulsed along the bond like a physical presence.

The Vulcan stood, forcing Jim to take a step back, and then turned him with firm hands on his shoulders, so that he could see Jim’s backside.

“Spock, come *on*.” He tried to turn back, but Spock kept him where he was with firm hands.

“This is unacceptable.”

When Spock released him, Jim turned back around to face him. “It’s just a few training injuries!”

“It will not continue. I will not allow you to be hurt.”

“It’s just a little bruising!”

“I have seen you hurt too many times. I have sworn that you will be safe here. This ends now, Jim.”

Jim felt his desperation rising. If Spock decided it was over, there was no way in hell Vorik would keep training him. “Are you really just going to decide for me? We’re not even going to talk about it first?”

Spock paused, his ire still broadcasting clearly through the bond. “If you wish to speak further, I will listen.”

Jim thought for a moment, knowing he needed to choose his words carefully. “Look, I know it bothers you to see me hurt, but these injuries really are minor. I’ll have Bones take a look when I see him tomorrow, but I suspect there isn’t any medical reason I can’t keep training. And I swear Vorik is being careful. He’d never let me get seriously injured.”

“And yet you *are* injured,” Spock said quietly.

“A little, but Spock... I need you to understand what you’d be taking away if you put a stop to it. I’ve been scared a lot in my life, for me, for Tom and Kev, for *you*, and for—for others I’ve cared about.” Sam’s face flashed through his mind. “And I always tried to protect myself and those I cared about as best I could, but I—I failed a lot. I know I’m still not that strong, but feeling like I’m able to defend myself a little better? And those I care about? Spock I *need* that. So please, I’m begging you, don’t take it away.”

Spock was silent for a long moment, dark eyes considering him, and then he took both of Jim’s hands in his. “You are a very troublesome human. Every instinct tells me that I should keep you from harm, but I do not want to take away something that is so important to you. You may continue, provided that Dr. McCoy examines your injuries and does not deem it medically necessary for you to stop.”

Jim let out a long shuddering breath. Spock had listened to him, respected his wishes even when they conflicted. He felt that lifting in his heart again, that feeling that maybe this was really where he was meant to be. “Thank you, thank you so much.”

“Come, let me tend to you,” Spock said quietly, gentle hands pulling him close.

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After grumbling over his injuries—but thankfully not demanding that he stop training—Bones gave Jim a drink and the two of them sat on Bones’ old couch to catch up.

T’Pol was in the car outside. It was a little weird, having a Vulcan escort, but he was getting used to it. He was mostly relieved that Spock was okay with his friendship with Bones, even

allowing Bones to touch him for medical reasons, though he kept all non-necessary touching to a minimum.

“It’s good to see you, Jim,” Bones said, taking a swig of his whiskey.

“You too. The kids miss you, too – next time we’ll have to schedule this when they’re off school.”

“Still can’t believe that they’re at that fancypants private school,” Bones said, shaking his head. “They likin’ it?”

“Yeah, they do. Kev especially-he’s apparently doing really well in all his classes. Tom’s struggling a little more to adapt, but he’s getting there.”

“Good to hear.” Bones swirled his drink and fixed him with a penetrating look. “And how’re things with Spock?”

Jim knew Bones didn’t exactly approve of their relationship, especially after hearing an abridged version of what had happened with Sybok. “They’re good, Bones. Really good.”

“And you’re still absolutely sure this is what you want? To be with him? You’re not just doing this because you think it’s best for the kids?”

“I’m sure. I really like him. And he’s—he’s good to me. His mom has started tutoring me.”

“That’s really great, kid. And the fact that he’s, y’know, a dangerous mob boss and all-that isn’t affecting you?”

Jim shrugged. “Not really. I mean, a lot of it doesn’t even sound that bad, what he tells me anyway...”

“Now wait just a minute, he’s talkin’ to you about his business?”

“Well... yeah, some.”

Bones’ eyes narrowed. “Why, though?”

Jim shrugged, starting to feel a little uncomfortable. “I don’t know. I guess just so he has someone to talk to about it?” Though that explanation... didn’t quite fit. And suddenly Jim did find himself wondering. It was maybe a little weird that Spock had started telling him more about his dealings, had even invited him to ask questions on occasion.

His discomfort grew, more so than really made sense, and suddenly Jim realized that it wasn’t only *his* discomfort he was feeling. It was *Spock’s*, and it rapidly became so severe that it knocked the breath out of him. Involuntarily he clutched at his chest.

“Jim? Jim, are you okay?”

“I, uh... give me a second...”

He closed his eyes, reaching out through the bond: *“Spock? Are you okay?”*

*“Are you still at Dr. McCoy’s?”*

*“Yeah, I’m here. Seriously, what’s wrong?”*

*“I learned some disturbing information. You need not concern yourself with it at present.”*

*“You’re sure you don’t need me to come home?”*

*“I... do not wish to cut into your time with your friend. I will explain everything when you come home.”*

*“Okay...”*

The pain in his chest evaporated, and Jim realized that Spock was shielding. He was, however, still sending something to Jim: affirmation, affection, and something like an apology? It felt good, but it also made Jim a little apprehensive. Just what was it that had bothered Spock so much?



# Chapter 4

## Chapter Summary

**WARNING: This chapter includes references to past underage non-con. Nothing graphic, but please take care <3**

Thank you so much for your kudos and reviews! And sorry that this is a darker/sadder chapter!

Jim was thriving. He had embraced his lessons with fervor and had even been receptive to Spock's efforts to slowly introduce him to the business of the House of Surak. It would soon be time to discuss his role there more explicitly. Even more importantly, he seemed genuinely happy with Spock. Spock was hopeful that when the time came, Jim would agree to the bond becoming permanent.

While he did not particularly like that Jim had such a close male friend, the fact that Dr. McCoy saw to Jim's medical needs was reason enough to tolerate it. The bond allowed him to ensure that McCoy did not touch his mate inappropriately, and of course, he *did* trust Jim. More than anyone else. That was why he wanted Jim as his partner in all things.

Jim was still with Dr. McCoy when the children arrived home from school. Spock could hear Kevin talking animatedly about his day as he walked to the library with Amanda, but Tom's footsteps stopped outside his office. After a moment, Spock called out, "Would you like to come in?"

There was a sharp intake of breath before the door creaked open and Tom stepped inside, looking slightly embarrassed.

"Is something wrong?" Spock asked.

"It's just..." Tom bit his lip, gaze on the floor.

"Yes?"

"It's the kids at school."

"Were they unkind to you?"

His eyes met Spock's. "They—they say you're a bad guy, but I know you're not!"

Spock cared nothing for the opinions of Tom's peers, but he did not want the child to suffer because of their association. "You need not concern yourself with what they say about me."

“But it’s not true!” Tom insisted. “You can’t be a bad guy!”

Touched and a little amused by Tom’s vehemence, Spock replied, “I do appreciate your defense of me, but—”

“I know you can’t be! You’re the first person who’s taken care of Jim since Sam died!”

These words immediately caught Spock’s full attention. He’d had no intention of interrogating the children about Jim’s past, but he could not help asking for clarification: “Sam?”

“Jim’s big brother. He looked after us all at the orphanage, but then he got sick.” Tom’s eyes began to water.

Spock’s heart clenched in his side. His bondmate had experienced such loss, had been alone and in a position of responsibility from such a young age.

Tom kept speaking, the words pouring out of him seemingly of their own volition, tears streaking his cheeks: “And ever since then, Jim took care of us. When there wasn’t enough food, he’d say he already ate and give his to us, but I knew he was lying! And when they wanted to hurt us, Jim would always make sure they focused on him! And I know—I know he was supposed to be a kid, too, but he was there for us, and no one was ever there for him. Not until you.”

Ever since Spock had learned of the children’s existence, it had been clear to him that Jim would do anything to protect them. He thought of his mate’s fierce determination to learn Suus Mahna, of his occasional reluctance to eat. And he vowed to personally make sure that Jim felt strong enough to defend himself, and to keep a closer watch on whether he was eating properly. “But I am here for him now, for all of you. I will not allow any of you to be hurt or go hungry again. Tom, none of what happened to Jim was your fault.”

“But it was! Mr. Gold would—would take Jim away at night sometimes. I don’t know what he was doing, but I think it was bad, because Jim didn’t want to go, but Mr. Gold said that if he didn’t, he’d take me instead, so Jim went with him!” Tom began to sob, and he buried his face in Spock’s chest. Spock put an arm around him.

The other hand gripped his shelf so hard the wood cracked. Fury clouded his vision. He would kill the man who had hurt his bondmate, would tear him limb from limb with his bare hands, would—

“*Spock? Are you okay?*”

Apparently his distress was potent enough to alert Jim. Spock wanted desperately to see him, to touch and hold him. “*Are you still at Dr. McCoy’s?*”

“*Yeah, I’m here. Seriously, what’s wrong?*”

Spock forced himself to calm. “*I learned some disturbing information. You need not concern yourself with it at present.*”

*"You're sure you don't need me to come home?"* Spock felt a rush of affection toward Jim. He gently shielded his mind so Jim would stop feeling his anger and pain, and sent through love and affirmation.

*"I... do not wish to cut into your time with your friend. I will explain everything when you come home."*

*"Okay..."*

He refocused on Tom. "It was *not* your fault. None of it was. You were children, and you were mistreated by adults who were charged with your care. All that matters now is that you are all safe." With a small jolt of surprise, he realized that somewhere along the way, he'd come to care about the children in their own right, and not simply as Jim's wards.

Tom continued to cry for several minutes, taking great hiccupping breaths, until finally he pulled away, wiping at his eyes. "S-sorry I cried on you."

Spock handed him a tissue. "It is all right. Now, I have been told that humans require ice cream after crying. Is this true?"

Tom let out a choked laugh. "Yeah."

"Come." As they walked to the kitchen, he reestablished his controls. He did not want to set Tom off again, so he kept his voice gentle as he asked, "Do you recall the name of the orphanage where you lived?"

"Tarsus. Or it was, anyway. Jim tried to go back later, to see if he could help some of the other kids, but it had closed down."

"And the man who took Jim away at night, his name was Mr. Gold?"

"That's what we called him, but I don't think that was his real name."

Spock nodded. "Here is your ice cream."

He did not think Jim would appreciate him possessing this knowledge about his past, but he would want to know what had caused Spock's distress, and Spock did not wish to lie outright. Moreover, Spock wanted to offer comfort to his mate...

And he wanted to know the identity of his tormentor so that he could tear out the man's heart with his bare hands. It was not a violation of his promise to Jim, he decided, to at least investigate the Tarsus Orphanage—and try to learn the identity of Mr. Gold.

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As soon as Jim got home, he reached out through their bond to find out where Spock was. The moment he walked into their bedroom, he was wrapped in strong Vulcan arms that held him close.

"Are you okay?" Jim asked softly. "What happened?"

“Tom spoke to me... about Tarsus.”

Jim went very still. He'd tried so hard to exorcise the memories of his time there. He never talked about it, not with anyone. “What did he say?”

“He told me that you lost a brother.”

Tears sprang to his eyes. It still knocked the breath out of him, that Sam was really gone. “Yeah... Consumption.”

“I grieve with thee.”

“I miss him so much. He was all I had, for a long time,” Jim whispered hoarsely.

“And when he was no longer there to protect you... they hurt you.”

Jim stepped out of Spock's embrace, gaze skittering across the floor, looking for a safe place to land. Spock let him go. “Yes, they—they beat us sometimes.”

“But that is not all.”

So, Spock already knew. “No.” His mind flashed to the face that had haunted his dreams, to that knowing smirk and those *cold, blue eyes*.

Spock breathed in sharply. For a moment Jim considered shielding, but it was too late, Spock had seen. “Jim...”

“It was a long time ago. We got out. I did what I had to. I—I only wished I could have gotten all the kids out of there. I tried--I tried to go back for them, but--”

“I know. You have done more than anyone could have expected. I am so sorry, *Ashayam*.”

Jim knew what that word meant: *beloved*. He was Spock's beloved. “He can't hurt me anymore. Everything is different now.”

“Yes, it is,” Spock agreed. “Was it only Mr. Gold?”

“Yeah... He's the only one who touched me.”

“And do you know his real name?”

Jim shook his head.

“Can I hold you?” Spock asked softly, and at Jim's nod, wrapped his arms around Jim again. “Far too many people have hurt you. I wish I could have prevented it. I wish I could destroy them all. But I *can* protect you. I will never let anyone hurt you again. And I will help you become strong enough to feel safe... Jim, I do not want you to do 'what you have to' ever again, only what you want to.”

Jim's breath caught. It wasn't the first time Spock had pledged to protect him-far from it-but this was more than that.

A knock on the door interrupted his thoughts. "What?" Spock called out sharply.

"My apologies for the intrusion," came T'Pol's voice. "But there's been an attack on a Klingon depot. It's the Romulans."

"Gather everyone in my office, I will be there momentarily." Spock pulled back to meet his eyes. "I am sorry, but I must deal with this."

"I understand. And I'm okay, really."

Spock kissed his forehead, and then headed for the door, but he paused with his hand on the doorknob and turned back. "...Will you join us?"

"Join you?" Jim echoed.

Spock nodded. "The choice is yours."

Jim stared at him. He was asking Jim to come with him to the meeting, but it felt like much more than that. He knew that he could say no, that he didn't have to do this if he didn't want to. But...

"...Yes."

# Chapter 5

## Chapter Summary

Thank you for reading!

No one seemed surprised by Jim's presence at the meeting. He'd noticed a subtle shift in the way they treated him ever since Sybok's death, and wondered if it was because he had been the one to pull the trigger.

The group consisted of about who he expected: Vorik, T'Pring, and a handful of other Vulcans. It also included Amanda, who spoke rarely but was always listened to respectfully. Jim said nothing, just tried to wrap his head around the whole thing. Apparently, no Klingons had been injured in the attack, but there had been property damage. They would be out for blood but would likely settle for compensation. Spock and Vorik would soon be departing for a meeting with the Klingons and Romulans to settle terms.

*"Promise me you'll be careful,"* he told Spock through the bond.

*"I am always careful,"* Spock replied, along with a burst of gratitude for Jim's concern.

It was clear, Spock went on, that recompense for the current attack was not a long-term solution to the problem. The Romulans were escalating.

"We should consider eliminating the new Romulan leader," T'Pring said, as calmly as if she was discussing the weather. "The Klingons would support it, and I do not believe even the Romulans would protest for long. They cannot all be pleased with the course he has chosen."

Jim swallowed hard, and reminded himself that yes, that was something the House of Surak did. Spock may have promised not to seek revenge on those who had hurt Jim, but he'd certainly made no promises to change the way the Vulcan mob operated.

It didn't make it any easier to hear Spock's reply: "It may yet come to that."

The more he heard about this leader, however, the more it sounded as if *something* needed to be done about him. "I do not understand why," Spock said at one point, "but I believe Nero is trying to start a war."

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Jim was exhausted, but he couldn't sleep.

He'd hugged the children almost too tightly when he tucked them into bed. Tom was getting a little too old to be tucked in, but they'd had so little time to be regular children. Despite

Jim's concerns that Tom might be upset after talking to Spock about Tarsus, he was in good spirits, and told Jim how he glad he was that they lived with Spock.

Spock was still out meeting with Nero, who sounded unstable at best. Jim kept a close watch on the bond, but all he got was a sense of calm control. Because this was what his bondmate dealt with all the time.

When Spock finally came home, he paused at the sight of Jim sitting up in bed, a book on his lap that he'd been trying and failing to read. He came over to cup Jim's face and give him a gentle kiss. "You should be asleep."

Jim shrugged. "Couldn't. Everything okay?"

Spock pulled away and began changing into his sleeping robe. "For the moment. The Klingons have accepted compensation, but it's certainly not over."

"Nero?"

"He is angry, and that makes him dangerous. When he first came here, I thought he simply desired more territory and power for the Romulans, but I now believe his actions to be more emotionally motivated."

"Does he have something personal against the Klingons?"

There was a pause, and then: "I am beginning to believe his issue is with the Vulcans, but that he knows he lacks the power to attack us directly."

That set off alarm bells in Jim's mind: "But—but why? What's his problem with you?"

"I do not know. I must determine if it is indeed his personal vendetta, or if there is some other motive, or someone else influencing him."

Jim let out a slow exhale. "I don't like this."

"Nor do I," Spock replied, pulling back the blanket and sitting beside him in bed. "But you need not be overly concerned."

"I'm your bondmate, I'm allowed to be concerned," Jim fired back. Spock's lips quirked slightly with amusement, but Jim knew it was time to ask the question that had been on his mind: "Spock... why are you telling me all this? Why was I in that meeting?"

The Vulcan's eyes met his, and there was only a beat of hesitation before he said: "Because I want you to truly be part of the House of Surak."

It wasn't really a surprise, though it was still strange to hear. "But I don't know anything about—" He gestured vaguely.

"Perhaps not, but I am well aware of your intelligence, and there is no one I trust more than you. If you decline to be involved, I will accept it, but I know you would strengthen us."

“Besides keeping peace between the different Houses, I don’t even really know what you do, Spock.”

“Much of our business is transportation and manufacturing, though we also make significant profit from gambling and the sale of illegal alcohol. The prohibition of Romulan ale and other foreign alcohol was not a wise choice by the authorities.”

“Drugs?”

“Never.”

“Weapons?”

“On occasion, but only if we wish for them to fall into certain hands. Flooding the streets with firearms does not serve our purposes. Indeed, one of the impacts of the Vulcans' rise has been a marked reduction in street crime and violence, which we do not tolerate. And at the root of all this is our true commodity: power. It is why the Romulans and the Klingons pay us tribute, why the police are allies rather than obstacles.”

“And that power,” Jim said slowly, “That power involves violence.”

“Yes. I will not lie to you. Violence is a necessary part of our operations, as is the threat of violence. You recall when I told you about the origins of the House of Surak? It is our power that keeps us safe, that protects the Vulcan people in this country. But you also know my reputation, that I have no interest in violence for its own sake.”

“But you would take out the Romulan leader if you thought it was necessary?”

“I would, yes,” Spock said without apology. “But I certainly do not want war, if it can be avoided—not even a war I know we can win.”

“I don’t know, Spock. I don’t want to be involved in hurting anyone.” He knew he needed to accept that Spock *would* hurt people—that wasn’t going to change, no matter how loving and gentle Spock was with him.

“You need not be, if you do not wish it.”

“How exactly did you imagine me being involved?”

Spock hesitated.

“You promised you’d be honest about what you wanted from me,” Jim pressed.

“So I did,” Spock conceded. “I want you to be my second.”

Jim gaped. Him? Second-in-command to the leader of the Vulcan mafia? “Uh... I... I don’t know what to say. That’s...” *Crazy. Impossible.*

“Do not panic. It is like everything else between us—your choice, and not one you need to make immediately. You know that you and the children will always have my protection, but



you told me that you wished to gain strength so that you could protect those you care about. This offers you much greater strength than you have acquired learning Suus Mahna.”

The words resonated-far more than he wanted them to. How long had he been at the whim of others who held more power than him? How often had he failed to protect those who needed it? For a moment Spock's offer seemed incredibly tantalizing. But was he really considering this? Was he really the type of person who could be intimately involved in the operations of the mafia? He knew he was stalling a bit when he asked, “Wouldn’t you rather have T’Pring? Or Vorik?”

“They each have their roles, but neither is a replacement for Stonn.”

Spock so rarely mentioned Stonn’s betrayal that Jim felt the urge to hug him, but he forced himself to stay focused. “What would that even mean, being your second?”

“It would mean you familiarize yourself with all of our operations, advise me, and if need be act in my stead. However, I will not risk you being hurt. I will not send you to meetings outside this compound.”

Despite having no idea how he felt about all this, that last remark still prompted an immediate desire to push back: “So you can take the risk but I can’t?”

“Yes,” Spock said firmly. “I will not put you in danger for our business.”

Jim wanted to argue with it, but realized that for the moment it was beside the point. “I really don't know about all this, Spock.”

“For now, you could simply talk things over with me, continue to learn how we operate, and decide when you are ready.”

“And... if I decide I don’t want this? You wouldn’t be disappointed?”

Spock’s lips curled upward slightly. “If I have you, I could never be disappointed. Now I believe it would be prudent for us to sleep. It has been a trying day.” Spock turned off the bedside lamp and then shifted to lie down. Jim did the same, moving into Spock’s open arms.

“I’m glad you’re home. I was worried,” Jim admitted.

“I will always come back to you.”

“What you learned about Tarsus... that doesn’t change anything?” he asked very quietly, keeping his face hidden against Spock’s neck. He didn’t know why it should matter—after all, he’d sold himself at the club, and Spock didn’t hold that against him. But it did matter, somehow.

“Jim, you are my bondmate, you are *mine*. Nothing could change the way I feel for you, certainly not violence that was done to you when you were a child. And I am constantly impressed by how well you cared for the children, despite facing such challenges.”

The words soothed something aching in Jim's chest, and he pressed closer into Spock's warmth. "You're always saying I'm yours... are you mine, too?" He kept the words light, teasing, hoping Spock couldn't tell just how much the answer mattered.

"Yes, Jim, I am."

# Chapter 6

## Chapter Summary

Your reviews for this verse are my absolute favorite to read! Thank you so much for being invested in it - it definitely wouldn't have come this far without you all! (Williamspockspeare, you inspired the first scene I wrote for "Eternal", though it won't show up until near the end!) Barbiedoll, this chapter is for you >>

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Spock was delighted.

Though he remained wary, Jim was taking to House of Surak business as he did everything that required him to exercise his considerable intelligence; both Vorik and T'Pring had commented on his ability to rapidly assimilate information. He also continued to improve in his Suus Mahna and in his studies with Amanda. And through it all, he demonstrated deep affection for his bondmate. Clearly, Spock had chosen well.

Jim was touchingly concerned for Spock in the conflict with Nero, but things had been relatively quiet since the attack on the Klingons. Spock was of course under no illusions that the matter was settled, and was in fact surprised by Nero's restraint and wisdom in not acting against Spock directly, which would have resulted in the Romulan's swift death.

Yet Nero did not strike Spock as particularly intelligent, nor as particularly in control of his impulses. T'Pring wanted Spock to preemptively remove Nero from power, but he knew the value of patience when there were important unanswered questions, particularly around what—or more likely who—was holding Nero back.

At the moment, however, he had a meeting to acquire information of a different sort.

"Spock," the human woman said in greeting. "You're looking very handsome today. Is that a new suit?"

"Uhura," he replied, a hint of warning in his tone. She had an unfortunate tendency to flirt with him, but was nevertheless a skilled spy and assassin, someone he could call on for assignments that were better suited to humans than Vulcans. "What have you discovered?"

She flashed her teeth in a grin and launched into her report. "Your information was correct: the Tarsus Orphanage closed down almost four years ago, and the children were sent to other institutions. There were apparently allegations of improper behavior, but it was never investigated."

“And the owners?”

“That’s the strange part: all the records of who owned the place have disappeared.”

Spock’s eyes narrowed. “Is there any indication of who took them?”

“Mmhm. It took some bribery, but I was able to uncover who was responsible: the Romulans. I still have no idea why, though.”

Although he kept his face neutral, this information startled him.

Sarek had once told him that Vulcans do not possess the same instincts as humans—but that as a hybrid, he would benefit from human instincts and should take full advantage of them. And his every instinct told him that he needed to find out what the Romulan connection was to Tarsus.

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“Sounds frustrating,” Jim said—and then grunted in pain when he was thrown roughly to the ground.

“B’Elanna is *not* frustrating!” Vorik shot back.

Jim blinked up at him in surprise. “Uh, I’m sorry...”

For a moment there was fury etched on Vorik’s face—but it was quickly replaced by remorse. He extended a hand to help Jim up. “It is I who must apologize. Please forgive my lapse.”

Jim eyed Vorik dubiously—he’d never known the Vulcan to be anything but calm and steady—but allowed himself to be pulled to his feet. “Are you ok? Maybe we should stick to either sparring or House business, and not both at once.”

“In general, engaging in both simultaneously should pose no difficulty. However, I find I am... compromised, at present. It would be wise to cut our training session short for today.”

“Okay, I hope you feel better.”

“Thank you... I did not injure you?”

“I’m tougher than I look,” Jim replied with a smile.

“I am gratified to hear it.” With a curt nod, Vorik turned on his heel and departed.

Jim watched him go, a bit perplexed by the interaction, then shrugged and went inside. He decided to pop by Spock’s office and see if he was free—but the door opened as he approached, and to his surprise a human woman walked out.

“Oh... hi,” he said as their eyes met.

“Oh, he is *gorgeous*, Spock,” the woman said, her eyes trailing blatantly down his body before rising up to meet his gaze. “You must be Jim. Have you ever been with a woman?”

Thrown off by the question, Jim glanced at Spock, who had come out of the office behind her. While he preferred men, he *had* caught the eye of a few wealthy women who had found their way to the club—not that he thought mentioning it would be a good idea.

“He is mine,” Spock snapped, and Jim wisely kept his mouth shut.

“Oh, I’m well aware.” The woman turned to Spock with a sly smile. “I guess I can see now why you turned me down.”

The words made him uneasy, though he felt a bit silly for it. Of course there would be other people interested in Spock. He was attractive, wealthy, powerful... And this woman *was* beautiful. With a start, Jim realized that Spock was staring at him.

“*You are jealous*,” Spock said through the bond.

“*No! ...Should I be?*”

“*Certainly not. I only desire you.*” The Vulcan’s satisfaction *radiated* through the bond, and Jim looked away, his cheeks flushing.

“That is enough, Uhura,” Spock said aloud, but without malice, his attention still completely focused on Jim. “As you have clearly gathered, this is my bondmate Jim. Jim, Uhura assists me in investigating things that are easier for a human to access than a Vulcan. She was just leaving.”

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The rest of the afternoon had been an exercise in frustration. Spock had business to attend to, yet Jim was toying with the bond such that Spock wanted nothing more than to find him, tear off his clothing, and bend him over the nearest piece of furniture.

When he finally got to their bedroom that evening, there was no sign of Jim, but Jim had apparently moved the gramophone into their room and set it to play soft music. A few candles cast a soft glow over the scene. It was most irregular.

“*Jim?*” Spock asked through their bond.

“*Sit on the bed*,” came the reply. “*And keep your hands to yourself.*”

Spock complied, anticipation beginning to coil at the base of his spine.

As the song changed, the closet door opened, and Spock lost the ability to breathe. Jim was standing there, wearing nothing but a set of *very* high heels and the tasseled golden skirt he’d had on the first night Spock met him. He hadn’t worn it since he stopped going to the club.

Jim sashayed into the room, sliding his hands up his torso and then higher, sucking obscenely on his own finger, eyes fluttering closed.

“Come here,” Spock rasped, more than ready to get his hands on his bondmate, but Jim just grinned at him.

“Patience,” he purred, but through the bond came a wave of lust so powerful that Spock’s already hard cock twitched almost painfully in his pants. Jim turned around and gracefully bent at the waist, the tassels of the skirt sliding aside to reveal his bare ass, which he swung in a lazy circle before standing back up to peer over his shoulder at Spock.

Spock’s hands clenched into fists at his sides. He wanted badly to bury himself inside his mate and fuck him until Jim screamed his name.

“Not yet,” Jim teased, clearly having picked up on his thoughts. With a breathy little laugh, he spun around and dropped to his knees, crawling across the floor toward Spock, causing the skirt once again to spill to the sides and reveal the round curve of his ass, which swayed in the air as he moved closer. Spock was spellbound. When his mate reached him, he rested back on his heels, hands coming to Spock’s knees to push them apart.

Jim was on his feet in one smooth motion, twisting in an alluring dance, every brush of his body against Spock’s sending shivers of lust through him. Jim’s own erection was visible through the tassels, making Spock’s mouth water.

“I want you,” Spock whispered.

“And you’ll have me... when I’m ready.”

He turned around and bent over, tantalizingly slow. The sight of his hole, already slick and open, sent a jolt of white-hot desire through Spock. Jim straddled his legs, rubbing his ass lightly against Spock’s still-clothed cock.

“You are already ready for me,” Spock replied between grit teeth, not caring that his voice held a note of pleading. Of their own accord, his hands seized Jim’s hips to pull him firmly against him. Jim ground down for a moment—before pulling abruptly away.

“I thought I told you to keep your hands to yourself.”

Spock could not withhold a groan of frustration.

Jim moved closer again and dropped to his knees, his hands reaching for Spock’s pants. Spock gasped in relief as his cock finally sprang free, the human’s breath ghosting over it. Bright blue eyes looked up at him from under long blond lashes as the human wrapped his lips around the head of Spock’s cock. A soft moan slipped unbidden from Spock’s lips at the incredible sensation. Slowly sliding down, Jim swirled his tongue along the underside, sucking deliciously.

“Jim, I need you.. Please.”

Jim pulled off and gave him a brilliant smile. “Since you asked so nicely.” He rose up to position himself over Spock and slid down onto his cock in one smooth movement. Spock moaned as he was engulfed in wet, tight heat.

“Fuck me,” Jim whispered in his ear, and Spock was happy to comply. His hands seized Jim's hips, moving him up and down on his cock. He relished the feel of Jim clenching around him, the needy noises that spilled from the human's lips.

Desperate for release, he flipped them over so that Jim was splayed on his back on the bed. Spock drove into him relentlessly, the human's legs around him, heels digging into his back. Spock's fingers found Jim's meld points, their minds rushing together in a collision of heat and joy. It was a feedback loop of pleasure, drawing them higher and higher until their shared climax shattered over them, so hard Spock was completely lost.

For a long moment they floated together, and then gently disengaged. Spock pulled his human close, holding him tightly. “I enjoyed that very much.”

“That was kind of the idea, Spock.” Jim’s amused voice was muffled against his neck.

“Did something in particular prompt this?”

Jim shrugged against him.

“...You were not truly jealous of Uhura?”

“No, it wasn’t that... I guess she just reminded me of how lucky I am to have you. I just wanted to do something for you. Plus, it's kind of nice to do this because I want to, and not because I have to.”

Spock’s heart tightened in his side. “You do a great deal for me, Jim, and are under no obligation to provide repayment in this form... However, I certainly would not object to occasional repeat performances.”

“Then you’ll have them.” Jim's lips found his, and they kissed, languid and perfect. Spock never wanted to let him go.

## Chapter End Notes

Not pictured: Uhura at home, fantasizing about being in a Jim/Spock sandwich.

There was a time when publishing this porn would have made me so embarrassed and now I’m just like here you go! Not sure what to make of that...

# Chapter 7

## Chapter Summary

I am so sorry this took SO long! Real life has been just wild lately. I also struggled to get this chapter just right, and I am still not sure it's there, but I didn't want to wait any longer. I can't promise to be much faster for the next few weeks, but I'll try!

Vorik had never been late for a practice session before. After about 15 minutes of waiting, Jim decided to go looking for him. The Vulcan had been acting strangely for the past few days, to the point where Jim was getting a little worried about him. He found himself wishing he'd raised the matter with Spock, but his bondmate had been extremely busy and Jim had never thought to raise it during the time they did have together. Spock was at a meeting now and had brought T'Pring with him, leaving Vorik in charge of the compound.

It was strange to think that he might be the person left in charge someday, but today was certainly not that day, for which he was grateful.

When he knocked on Vorik's door, the voice he heard from within did not at all resemble the calm, collected Vulcan he'd come to know. "*Go away!*"

"Vorik, are you okay?"

"I said *go!*"

Jim hesitated. Something was definitely wrong. But while he'd never been afraid of Vorik before, he was well aware of how dangerous the Vulcan could be if he wanted to.

"Okay, let me know if you need anything."

He turned to go—and then yelped when the door slammed open. Vorik's eyes were bloodshot, his hair in disarray, his clothing rumpled. Jim's jaw dropped at the sight and he instinctively took a step back.

"I must find her," the Vulcan grit out between clenched teeth.

"Must find... who?"

But Vorik didn't answer, merely strode off down the hall without another word.

"Where are you going?"

"To find B'Elanna!"



Jim stared after him for a moment, and then ran out into the courtyard after him. He knew he couldn't stop Vorik, but he could at least try to figure out what was going on, and maybe find someone who could help.

His thoughts were interrupted by another Vulcan rushing toward them and shouting Vorik's name. What he said next made Jim's blood run cold: "There are Romulans at the gate!"

Suddenly Vorik's bizarre behavior turned from concerning to terrifying. Jim didn't know what the Romulans were doing here, but this was exactly why a senior member of the House of Surak was always in charge while Spock was out—and Vorik seemed to be in no condition to handle anything at all.

Vorik strode right past the other Vulcan as if he wasn't even there.

"Something's wrong with him," Jim said quickly.

"Did he say where he was going?"

"To find B'Elanna. She's a Klingon who—"

The Vulcan spun on their heels to run after Vorik toward the outer gates. Jim ran after them, desperately wishing that Spock was home. His heart beat a staccato rhythm in his chest as he reached out through the bond: "*The Romulans are here!*"

Spock's concern flooded his mind. "*I'm coming. Stay inside and let the others handle this.*"

"...*Tom and Kevin are inside. And something is wrong with Vorik. I need to do what I can to protect them.*"

Spock's fear, helplessness, *anger*, it was too much. "*I need to focus on what's happening,*" he told his bondmate—and then shielded his mind. Spock could break through if he wanted, but he remained quiet, for which Jim was grateful.

He refocused on the scene before him. A group of Romulans was walking toward the gate and Vorik was shouting at a guard: "You *will* open the gate! I must go!"

"You cannot think that wise when the Romulans are here!" the guard replied.

And then Vorik *growled*, and struck so quickly Jim's eyes could barely follow the movement. The guard slumped to the ground, unconscious. The other Vulcan ran at him, but he was too fast, too strong. Jim gaped, realizing just how much he'd been holding back when they sparred.

Alarm bells were going off in Jim's head, but he could only watch as Vorik incapacitated the other Vulcan and opened the gate. Then he tore off on foot as if possessed... leaving Jim alone with the Romulans, who had wisely stepped aside as Vorik ran past them.

One of the Romulans smirked and stepped through the gate. His grin was full of teeth. "If it isn't Spock's human whore. I didn't expect you'd be the one to greet us."

White hot terror shot up Jim's spine-and then, as it always did in moments of crisis, a feeling of calmness descended. Sam's voice echoed in his head: *Stay calm. What do you need to do, right now?* He didn't carry a weapon around the compound anymore, but he stuck his hand inside his coat anyway, pretending that he did, and asked coldly, "What do you want?"

"I see Spock hasn't taught you any manners. You're supposed to introduce yourself. Like this: Hello, James. I'm Nero."

Jim clung desperately to his calm. He'd heard nothing but awful things about Nero-not to mention the fact that the Romulans were armed, and there were four of them. He glanced down at the incapacitated guard, but the weapon was too far away for him to reach. With a confidence he absolutely did not feel, Jim said, "What do you want, Nero?"

"What I *want* should be quite obvious: retribution, for all Spock has taken from me."

"What are you talking about?"

Nero's face clouded, amusement replaced by anger. "Spock took my family from me, murdered them in cold blood. I've waited long enough to pay him back in kind."

For a moment, Jim felt as if his heart had stopped beating. That couldn't be true... right?

"My wife, My *children*," Nero went on, stepping closer.

"It's not true," Jim whispered.

Nero took another step forward-and then jumped backward as gunfire rang out, chopping at the dirt in front of his feet.

Jim looked over in surprise to see Amanda, tommy gun in hand, flanked by two Vulcans.

"It's time for you to leave," she said, voice calm and almost kindly.

"No!" Nero grit out.

"You have exactly 20 seconds to get back in your car and drive away, or you die."

Jim gaped at her.

"You can't just--"

"15 seconds."

Nero's hands clenched into fists. With a hiss, he returned to the car, and the Romulans drove away.

Jim let out a shaky breath, the fear washing over him. He had been so close to disaster. If Amanda hadn't come-

A gentle hand landed on his arm, and Jim jumped.

Amanda was smiling gently at him. "Would you like some tea, Jim?"

"Um... yes, please. What about them?" He gestured to the unconscious Vulcans.

"They'll take care of it," Amanda said, gesturing to her companions. Without another word, she handed the gun off to one of them and took Jim's arm.

"And... Vorik?"

"There's nothing we can do for him now."

Jim didn't want to know what that meant, so he let Amanda lead him inside as he reached out through the bond to let Spock know they were all okay. Sitting at the kitchen table a few minutes later, he stared down at the mug in his hands, watching the dark liquid glisten in the kitchen light. He felt shaky and drained, both exhausted and strangely energetic. It was not a good feeling. "Do you think it's true?"

Amanda didn't pretend not to understand. "No. Spock is not in the habit of killing families. He would simply have killed Nero."

Something unclenched in Jim's chest, and he nodded.

"Were you concerned that it was?"

A blush colored his cheeks. "Only for a moment, but... I didn't really believe it."

Amanda hummed, sipping her tea. "You do know he'll kill Nero for this."

Jim wanted to protest—Spock had promised not to avenge him. But this was about a lot more than him; he had threatened Spock's home, his family, everyone he cared for. "Yeah, yeah I know." For a minute or so, they drank in silence, and then Jim said quietly, "I didn't know that you were like this."

The corners of Amanda's lips curled upward. "I was the House of Surak's right hand for 15 years."

Jim stared, realizing how badly he'd misjudged her. "You—you were? But why aren't you now?"

"When I lost Sarek, I lost my taste for it. But I was his partner in all things."

None of them talked much about Spock's father, and Jim found himself intrigued. "Did you like it?"

"I did," Amanda said, smiling almost nostalgically. "But I am glad that I was able to step back. I have no desire to be so involved again. You were handling yourself quite well out there, Jim."

Jim flushed, and he shrugged. He didn't think he was handling it very well at all. "I was terrified."

"You'd be foolish not to be. It was a very dangerous situation."

"Yeah... I don't understand it through. If Spock *didn't* kill Nero's family, then he's mad about something that didn't even happen."

"Oh, I'm sure *someone* killed his family. His anger was quite genuine, so he must believe that Spock was responsible."

"Which means someone told him that Spock was. And that someone... is likely whoever *actually* killed them," Jim said in realization.

"Mmmhm," Amanda agreed. "Someone very dangerous is trying to use Nero for their own ends. Nero's behavior will likely start a war that has the potential to weaken both the Romulans and the Vulcans."

"But who would be able to orchestrate such a thing? I mean... the Klingons have been attacked by the Romulans too."

"I agree with your assessment. While it is possible that a rogue Klingon or Romulan faction is responsible, I believe it far more likely that the actual culprit is human."

Jim didn't know why, but her word made him shiver.

## Chapter 8

### Chapter Summary

I am so sorry I have been soooo slow! I can't promise to be super quick moving forward, but I certainly hope the next chapter won't take this long! I am starting a new job Monday and hope I can get into a more regular writing schedule. Thank you for your patience <3

"I'm so glad you're back," Jim whispered, clinging tightly to Spock, his face buried in the Vulcan's neck.

"I am sorry I was not here, Jim." Spock pressed a kiss behind his ear and then pulled back slightly so he could meet Jim's gaze. It was such comfort, feeling Jim's body in his arms, seeing the warmth on his face. It had terrified him, knowing that Jim was being threatened and that he could not be there to protect him. He had wanted to see his bondmate immediately upon arriving home, but Jim had been tucking the children into bed, and so he had spoken with Amanda instead. "My mother said you handled yourself quite well."

Jim shook his head. "I was terrified."

"That is understandable... She also told me what Nero said. I assure you: I had nothing to do with his family's death. I have never, and will never, be party to violence against children."

"I know, love, I know," Jim replied, pressing a kiss to Spock's lips.

Spock's heart stuttered in his side. Jim did not seem to realize what he had said, but it was the first time he had referred to Spock in this manner. It filled him with delight, and hope.

"Do you know who did?" Jim continued, clearly oblivious to Spock's reaction.

Deciding it was not the time to press the matter, Spock could not resist kissing his human once more and pulling him down into his lap as he sat in the library arm chair. Jim wound his arms around Spock's neck, settling comfortably against him. "I do not. But I agree with my mother's assessment: Nero is being manipulated, and the true culprit is likely human. I have asked Uhura to investigate, as it will be easier for a human to access this information than any of my Vulcan agents."

"But what is this person trying to accomplish?"

"I cannot be certain until we identify them, but I do have a theory. There have been attempts over the years, but there is no human equivalent of the House of Surak. It is possible that someone is attempting to create conflict between us and the Romulans in hopes that we are both weakened, and that a human element will be able to seize power."

Jim was silent for a moment, considering. “So what are you going to do? Because if you do start this war, then you’re playing into your enemy’s hands. But you can’t just let Nero’s actions go unpunished, can you?”

In truth, Spock wanted to tear Nero apart with his bare hands for threatening his bondmate, though he did not think Jim would appreciate the sentiment. But beyond killing the Romulan, using force held little appeal. Spock had always seen violence as a scalpel to be used carefully, never as a cudgel to be swung thoughtlessly. He was surprised, however, by how little interest it held for him now. Perhaps... perhaps Jim’s distaste for it had affected him. He set this aside to be considered later. One thing was clear: he would do what needed to be done to protect Jim and his family.

“I know you have no taste for violence, but Nero must die.” He paused, feeling Jim shudder slightly against him. “He poses a continued threat to us, and it is important that everyone know that the House of Surak does not tolerate such threats.”

“Yeah... yeah, I understand.”

“However, perhaps that does not need to lead to war. Nero has already gone underground, and I will make it clear that his death is necessary. But I will give the other Romulans a choice: stand by him, or make peace with the House of Surak. The Romulan Commander was in charge before Nero’s arrival, and is still nominally the leader of the House of Karzan. I hope he will see the benefits of peace.”

“That’s what you want, then? To make peace?” Jim asked, his eyes searching Spock’s.

“It is,” Spock replied honestly. Minimizing violence was better for all of them. He felt his heart stutter again at the warm smile Jim gave him. Whatever had this human done to him?

But then Jim’s smile faded. “But... whoever’s manipulating Nero, where are they in all this?”

“There are two possibilities: either he has tied himself tightly to Nero, in which case he’ll be on the run as well. However, and I believe this is the more likely scenario: he may be even now distancing himself from Nero, whispering in the Commander’s ear.”

“He could poison the Commander against you as well, then. This—this sounds really dangerous, Spock...”

“I will be careful, Jim. You have my word. For now, however, neither you nor the children should leave the compound. We must operate as if the war has already begun.”

Spock could feel Jim’s reluctance through the bond, but he also knew Jim was smart enough to do what was needed to keep their family safe. “I don’t like feeling like we have to be locked away in here, but... I get it. I understand.”

“I am relieved to hear it. Nothing is more important than keeping you safe.” Spock carded a hand through Jim’s hair.

Jim clung to him more tightly, his affection flowing along the bond... Indeed, it was perhaps more than affection, and Spock closed his eyes, reveling in it. Once the specter of war no longer loomed over them, it would be time for another conversation about their future together.

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“Enter,” Spock called out when a soft knock came on his door.

It opened to reveal Vorik. “Spock, I beg your forgiveness for my lapse.”

Spock took in Vorik’s appearance: torn clothing, scrapes and bruises on his face and arms. He had clearly engaged in combat. Spock’s voice was ice as he replied: “You exposed the House of Surak to great risk by opening the gate to the Romulans, and you put *my bondmate* in harm’s way.”

Vorik’s head bowed in shame. “It was inexcusable. I can only beg your understanding. My time came upon me unexpectedly.”

“All Vulcans know the signs. Your ignorance was willful.”

Vorik’s eyes rose to meet his. “I will never let this happen again, I swear it.”

“No, you will not.” He regarded Vorik in silence for several long seconds, letting the Vulcan stew in his terror before finally saying: “You are lucky that my bondmate and my mother were able to handle the situation—and that my bondmate is fond of you. But you will beg for his forgiveness as well.”

“Of course,” Vorik replied, clearly relieved. “I will do anything he asks.”

“Is your pon farr resolved?”

“Yes.”

“Are you bonded, then?”

“I am not... I sought out B’Elanna Torres, but she challenged my claim, and chose to be her own champion. She defeated me.”

An unimpressed eyebrow arched on Spock’s face. “I expect better from you, Vorik. We are already facing war with the Romulans. Must I now clean up your mess with the Klingons?”

“No. B’Elanna and I agreed to keep the matter a private one... She has given me her permission to court her,” he added, clearly nervous.

Klingons could be ridiculous at times, and B’Elanna especially. It was just like her to refuse Vorik’s claim and then allow him an opening to persuade her. Still, a connection between the houses could be beneficial, provided Vorik remained loyal. “You may proceed, but you *will* keep me updated about any agreements made between you. Your allegiance to the House of Surak comes first.”

“Yes, I swear it, Spock.”

“Very well. There will be no further punishment—provided that my mate accepts your apology as well.”

“Of course.”

“Now get out of my sight.”

Vorik fled.

\*\*\*

T'Pring had spoken on the phone with the Romulan Commander. He had condemned Nero's actions at Spock's compound, but would not disown him altogether, though T'Pring suspected that he wanted to. He certainly preferred peace to war—especially since he had no hope of defeating Spock—and had proposed an in-person meeting to further negotiations. This was all very positive, but T'Pring seemed nervous, and so Spock knew that something critical remained unsaid.

"What is the trouble?" he asked bluntly.

"The Commander does not wish to go himself, considering the risk. He will send Vreenak in his stead."

"And?" Spock demanded, his patience growing thin.

"And there is only one agent he will accept from the House of Surak... Spock, he wants to meet with Jim."



# Chapter 9

## Chapter Summary

This verse is now almost 40,000 words...meaning I've written more of this than any other fic. That is 100% thanks to all of you - huge huge thanks for having read this far. So grateful to you all!!

Er, reminder that this is mob!verse so there is violence and death!

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“It is absolutely out of the question.” Spock’s tone brooked no argument, and for a moment any objection died on Jim’s lips.

But then he remembered that while he was Spock’s, Spock was his, too: his to protect, his to care for. And this wasn’t just about the two of them. A lot was at stake.

“Spock, think about it. This might be how we avoid going to war. If all it takes is me meeting with this Romulan—”

“No.”

“Do you really think they want me there to do violence toward me?” Jim reasoned. “That would just ensure that the full weight of the House of Surak comes down on their heads. Do you really think the Romulan Commander is that stupid?”

“It does not matter what the Romulan Commander intends. I have been very clear from the beginning that you are not to be involved in House business outside of the compound’s gates. I will not allow you to be put in danger. I have sworn to protect you, to keep you from the violence you have experienced over and over again in your life.”

“Spock, I’m *already* in danger.”

Jim almost regretted the words when he felt Spock’s pain like a shiver along the bond. “What happened with Nero was extremely regrettable. And yet it only makes me wish to be even more careful to allow nothing to happen to you. I cannot allow you to be hurt, Jim. I cannot lose you. I cannot allow Kevin and Tom to lose you. I must keep you safe.”

Jim searched his mind desperately for some way to convince the Vulcan. He stepped closer, cupping Spock’s face in his hands. “You said you’d help me get strong enough to protect the people I care about. This is how I can do that. Let me help, Spock. Let me protect you, and Kevin, and Tom. Let me be the partner you deserve.”

Spock's eyes bore into his, and then the Vulcan let out a soft sigh. "You are an exceptional being, Jim. I am very lucky to have found you."

"I'm glad you found me, too. Please, Spock, let me help."

"There is something you do not know that may change your mind about the prudence of meeting with the Romulans."

"What is it?"

"After I learned of your experiences at Tarsus, I investigated the orphanage."

"*What?* Why?" Jim asked sharply.

"They hurt you. I needed to know if the responsible parties might still pose a threat to you."

Jim felt anger bubbling up in his chest, displacing the initial shock. "You promised you wouldn't seek revenge on my behalf - you *promised*."

"And I have not broken that promise. I merely wished to possess more information about the situation. And I cannot regret my actions in this regard, as I have discovered that shortly after you fled Tarsus, the orphanage was closed, the owners disappeared, and all records were erased... by the Romulans."

Jim froze. He had tried so damn hard to forget every moment of what had happened to him at Tarsus. To relegate it firmly to the past where it belonged. The idea that Tarsus might somehow be relevant to his life now was terrifying. "What... what does that mean?"

"I cannot be certain, but if there is still a connection between the Romulans and Tarsus, I cannot risk you having any interaction with them."

"You—you mean—"

"It is possible that the human influencing the Romulans was involved with Tarsus."

Jim swayed on his feet and nearly stumbled—but Spock caught him. "No," Jim whispered, not wanting to believe it, feeling as if an icy hand was clamped around his heart.

"It is not a certainty, merely a possibility," Spock soothed, stroking Jim's hair, flooding the bond with tenderness.

Closing his eyes, Jim let Spock support him—physically and mentally—let him ease away the panic and the pain. He was still a little angry with Spock for having dug around in his past, but he could understand why Spock would do it. In fact, he should have expected it. His bondmate might love him dearly, might be willing to listen to him and compromise for him, but he was still *Spock*.

And Jim was still desperately grateful for him. Still wanted him so much. Still cared for him so much. Still felt... something so strong and all-consuming he wasn't sure he wanted to put a name to it. Spock would do anything to protect him. Jim felt exactly the same way.

“It doesn’t change anything. I should still agree to meet with Vreenak.”

“Jim—”

Jim pulled away to look into his eyes. “You don’t want war, do you?”

“...No, I do not.”

“Then let me do this. Let me protect you, and the kids, and the House of Surak. Please.”

For a long moment Spock just looked at him. Jim could feel it when he finally gave in, and felt a shiver run down his spine: fear, yes, but also pleasure that Spock was trusting him with something so important, that he was going to be able to do his part to keep their family safe.

Spock reeled him back in and kissed him.

“If anything happens to you, Jim, I will never forgive myself,” he whispered hoarsely.

“I’ll be fine, Spock. I’ll be fine.”

"There is something you should know, if you are to take on this role," Spock replied, voice sounding incredibly sad. "That is not a promise either of us can make."

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Vreenak was a middle-aged Romulan with a severe face. As they sat across from each other in the small tea shop that both sides had agreed upon for their meeting, Jim felt very much out of his league.

Vreenak looked as if he had a great deal to say about Jim, none of it kind, but instead he took a sip of his tea and then went straight to business. “I have come with a proposal from the Romulan Commander, one which I believe will solve the current disagreement between the House of Karzan and the House of Surak without need for a war.”

It was a promising start, and Jim could almost have smiled. Instead, he kept his face expressionless as best he could. “We’d be very interested in a peaceful conclusion to this unpleasantness, provided that our grievances are addressed.”

The Romulan’s eyes narrowed, but he nodded and took another sip of his tea. He looked as if he was about to speak, but all that came out was a soft cough. He pressed a hand to his chest and tried again—then began to cough harder.

“Vreenak?” Jim asked, suddenly concerned. “Vreenak, are you okay?”

\*\*\*

All of Spock’s attention was focused on the bond. It would allow him to advise Jim as needed and—mostly importantly—to watch for any signs that he needed to hasten to his bondmate’s side. The situation infuriated him, and he wondered again if bringing Jim into the business at all had been a mistake.

He had tried to have it both ways: to have Jim as his partner, and to keep him safe behind the compound's walls. He should have known it couldn't be that easy. But the Romulans might have requested to meet with Jim regardless, might feel they would be safer with him than with any of Spock's Vulcan agents, or that they would be better able to wring concessions from him. On that point, they would be disappointed. Jim was not easily cowed, and he had Spock in his mind to assist him.

Spock had seriously considered simply reigning terror down upon the Romulans for daring to put his bondmate in danger.... But it was not what Jim wanted. He was not used to this, not used to considering someone else's desires at the same level as his own. It was both disconcerting and oddly pleasing. Yet he could not help wishing that he would never again be in a similar situation, where he would have to risk Jim's safety to acquiesce to his wishes.

His thoughts were interrupted when a car came screeching into the parking lot where he was waiting. T'Pring leaped out and ran toward him.

"Spock! Uhura just called. She knows who's been influencing the Romulans. *It was one of the owners of Tarsus.*"

Spock's blood ran cold. He felt almost sick—and then realized that some of his disquiet was coming from Jim.

"We need to get to Jim—*now!*"

\*\*\*

"Vreenak!"

"*Spock! Something's wrong, Vreenak collapsed!*" Jim called through the bond.

"*I'm coming, Jim!*"

He had no idea what had happened, but this couldn't be good. A Romulan agent had come to meet him—and then collapsed. Would they blame him? Would they think he had done this?

"Vreenak! Vreenak, hold on! Help is coming!" He turned the Romulan onto his side, not wanting him to choke.

"It's too late for him."

The words cut through him like a knife. That *voice*, the voice that had tormented his waking hours and haunted his dreams.

*He slowly looked up, knowing what he would find, but it still knocked the breath out of him to see those cold, blue eyes looking down at him.*

*Mr. Gold's smile never touched his eyes. "It's been too long, Jim. You've grown up so well."*

We'll find out Mr. Gold's real name soon!

# Chapter 10

## Chapter Summary

I am so sorry this took me so long! I really wanted to get it out earlier but I was struggling to get it right aaaand I've been a little nervous to post this one, partly because of what's discussed in the endnote, and partly because this fic started so fluffy for mob verse and now has gotten much darker again. And on that note, **WARNING for this chapter: Memories of child sexual and physical abuse. It's not graphic but I still think this could be hard to read, so please take care! Also, people die.**

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

*“Don’t worry, we’re going to take care of you,” the man says when Jim arrives at the orphanage. Jim squeezes his teddy bear tighter and nods, daring to hope that it’s true. He has kind eyes, this man.*

*Jim is hungry a lot, but the man makes sure that everyone gets something even if it’s not enough. Jim thinks that maybe he’s a good man, that with him they have a chance of surviving.*

*Eventually, Tom comes to the orphanage, and Jim sees how little he is, and wants to protect him—the way Sam protects him, the way the nice man protects him.*

*But then one day the man, Kodos, dies. And Jim doesn’t know why he’s so scared when Mr. Gold pats him on the shoulder and tells him that he’ll be taking care of them from now on. Maybe it’s because Kodos had kind eyes, but Mr. Gold’s are so cold.*

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The force of Jim’s emotions hit Spock so hard he grunted aloud. The bond didn’t allow him to see what Jim was seeing, but Jim’s memories flitted through his mind like bullets, sharp and piercing. He could feel his bondmate’s horror, so strong that it became his own.

Jim’s thoughts were too jumbled for him to communicate, but Spock still understood: the man who had tortured and raped his bondmate was there in the room with him.

And Spock wasn’t there to defend him. He had failed to protect his bondmate, again. He should never have let this happen. The only thing he could do now was flood the bond with love and strength, to give his bondmate everything he had to help him through this—because Spock refused to accept that losing him was a possibility.

Out loud, he grit out to T’Pring between clenched teeth: “Who is he?”

“He goes by several aliases, including Mr. Gold. But his real name... is Christopher Pike.”

\*\*\*

*“I’m sorry, but you need to learn to behave, Jim. I’m doing you a favor,” Mr. Gold says the first time he hits Jim, hard enough to bruise. Jim is too shocked to speak, to protest. He tries not to cry, because he doesn’t want to make Mr. Gold angry. He thinks it must be his fault, somehow.*

*“It’ll be alright, Jim. It’ll be alright,” Mr. Gold says as he sobs and sobs after Sam dies. He strokes Jim’s hair, and Jim knows enough now to know that it will never be all right again. He knows Mr. Gold will only hurt him, but he doesn’t have anyone else.*

*“You’re growing up so well,” Mr. Gold says, the first time he puts his hand on Jim’s thigh. Jim doesn’t understand what’s happening at first. Even as it happens, the pervading emotion is confusion—until it’s replaced by pain. Afterward he lies in his bed and tries to sleep, but all he can see is the look in Mr. Gold’s eyes.*

*“I understand,” Mr. Gold says, once Jim’s worked up the courage to tell him he wants it to stop. He smiles in that way he has that sends terror weaving its way down Jim’s spine. “It’s okay. But someone has to pay the price of taking care of you kids. And if you won’t, then Tom will.” And just like that, Jim’s resolve crumbles, and he falls to his knees and begs to be the one. Mr. Gold makes him beg the entire time.*

*“Nicely done, Tom,” Mr. Gold says a few weeks later—and Jim sees the way Gold looks at him. And he knows that no matter what, he isn’t going to allow what’s happened to him to happen to Tom. Not now. Not ever. And that’s when he decides that it’s time to run.*

*“Look at me,” Gold says in the dreams that still haunt him occasionally. Jim doesn’t want to comply, but he always does.*

Jim couldn’t move, think, *breathe*. And then something else welled up in him: the feeling that he wasn’t alone. *Spock*. He clung desperately to Spock’s presence in his mind.

*“I’m coming, Jim.”*

He wasn’t a helpless child anymore. He had someone who believed in him, who cared for him, whose strength was wrapped around him now like a suit of armor. Slowly, Jim stood up, and his voice only shook a little as he asked, “What are you doing here?”

“I came for you, of course.”

The words sent a chill down Jim’s spine. “I don’t want anything to do with you.”

“Kid, what do you think they’re going to do when they find out you killed Vreenak?”

Panic bubbled up in him. “What—but—but I didn’t!”

“With a poisoned glass of tea in the one hand, and a dead Romulan in the other, what conclusion would you draw?”

Jim realized with horror that it was true. The Romulans would blame him for this—and where would that leave Spock?

“Vreenak isn’t part of Nero’s cabal, he’s one of the old guard. They’ll be out for blood... But I can help you.”

Staring at him, something clicked into place: “*You* did this. You killed Nero’s family. You manipulated him into trying to start a war with Spock. You set all this up so that peace wouldn’t stand a chance!”

“I always knew you were clever.”

“But... but *why*?”

“Because, Jim. The Romulans. The Vulcans. The Klingons. They’ve had power long enough in this city. They’ll tear each other to shreds, and once they’re done, there will be room for a new power, a *human* power. Tell me you aren’t tired of living under their thumb. Tell me you don’t yearn for something better than what they allow us.”

Jim had never had an easier time answering anything in his entire life. “You killed *children*, Gold. You’re starting a *war*. I would rather have *Nero* in charge than you!”

Gold laughed. “Well, lucky for me it's not up to you. Now, I can't have you trying to convince anyone that you didn't kill Vreenak, so I'd need you to come with me anyway, but I'm glad that fate's brought us together again. You're special, Jim. I've always known it.”

“I’m not going anywhere with you,” Jim said, backing away from him.

The gun seemed to appear in Gold’s hand as if by magic. “I wasn’t actually asking.”

“Spock will stop you!” Jim shot back, fighting down his rising panic at the thought of being under Gold’s power again.

“Ah yes, I heard the Vulcan had taken you in. That’s why it had to be you here today, someone Spock wouldn’t give up. But he’s not going to be able to help you this time. When he realizes something’s gone wrong and tries to come for you, Nero will be waiting for him.”

Jim’s blood ran cold. He called out through the bond: “*Spock, it’s a trap! Don’t come-Nero’s waiting for you!*”

“*You think I will let him stop me? You think I will let anything stop me from coming for you?*”

Jim’s mind raced. He needed to find a way to help his bondmate. “Spock’s stronger than Nero.”

“No one’s stronger than an ambush, kid. Nero will box in his car and then he’ll be caught in the crossfire.”

It was exactly what Jim had been hoping for: information to help Spock. He sent it though their bond and felt Spock’s gratitude.



“It doesn’t matter anyway, we’ll be long gone.” Gold leveled the gun at him. “Time to go.”

Jim hesitated. Would Gold really shoot him? And even if he was, would that be a better fate than going with him?

“Thinking I might not do it?” Gold asked with a grin. “Maybe I wouldn’t kill you, but I will shoot you if I have to. Now walk.”

That was believable enough, and Jim slowly moved in the direction Gold indicated.

“Good boy.”

Jim was torn between terror for himself and terror for his bondmate-but fear for Spock was winning out. *Please be okay*, he thought desperately.

In his head, he felt Spock coiled up like a snake ready to strike.

When it came, the burst of violence was so sharp it made Jim gasp and clutch at his head. He had always known Spock capable of this, but feeling it was different: a cold rage that seemed to sear him from the inside. It *hurt*, but it felt good at the same time. Like he could draw power from it.

Spock’s words, when they finally came, did not surprise him: “*Nero is dead.*”

But Jim was already in Gold’s car, a blindfold across his eyes and his hands bound, speeding away.

## Chapter End Notes

Um, please don’t kill me? It’s funny, I thought about changing the traitor in the last fic because everyone guessed who it was - and I thought about changing the bad guy in this one bc no one did! Kodos would also have made a ton of sense, but I decided to go with my initial plan and play w/ the idea that since this is mirror verse, someone who was normally good could be evil and twisted here.

PS: who got the DS9 reference?

# Chapter 11

## Chapter Summary

**WARNING for on-screen attempted non con in this chapter!! It doesn't get very far, but if that isn't something you want to read, stop at the \*\*\*. The rest of the fic will still make sense!** We are definitely in the darker times of this fic!

I am sorry this took FOREVER. My inspiration was elsewhere, and work is taking a lot out of me these days. Excited to get it going again! Thank you so much to everyone for your reviews on last chapter's reveal - you all are amazing!!

Fear lanced through Jim as Gold pushed him backward and he landed on a soft surface. A bed. *No, no, no!* Gold grabbed his wrists and quickly cuffed them to the bedframe above his head before pulling away. "I'll be back for you soon, Jim."

The words sent a chill down his spine. He couldn't see Gold through the blindfold, but he could hear a door close and the sound of footsteps growing fainter. Yet the fear didn't recede, and his heart hammered against his ribcage. He tried to tell himself nothing had happened, tried to get himself under control. Through the bond, he reached for Spock: *"I don't know where I am."*

*"I will find you, Jim. I swear it."*

Jim wanted to beg Spock to hurry, to race to his side, to focus on nothing else... but he knew it was too much to hope that Spock would be there before Gold returned. Especially since Spock had a more pressing priority than rescuing him. Summoning every scrap of courage he had, he tried to keep his mental presence calm as he replied: *"I know you will, Spock. It'll be okay. I'll be okay. But your first priority has to be stopping the war. Gold did all this. He killed Nero's family and convinced him that you did it. He encouraged the Romulans to start trouble with the Klingons. He poisoned Vreenak and is telling them I did it. He's trying to start a war so that the Romulans, the Klingons, and the Vulcans will all be weakened and there's room for him to seize power. You have to stop him."*

*"I will stop him, but I do not care if there is war. I do not care if I must wipe the Houses of Kahless and Karzan off this planet. I should never have put you in harm's way to appease them. And as for Christopher Pike, the man you know as Mr. Gold, I will tear him apart with my bare hands."*

As he spoke, Spock's anger burned along their link, so sharp and fierce it stole Jim's breath away. The reasonable version of his bondmate, the one who wanted to avoid violence as much as possible, was gone—subsumed by overwhelming fury.

*“No! Spock, please. We’ve worked so hard to prevent war. Don’t let that all be for nothing. Don’t let yourself fall into his trap.”*

*“There is very little I would not do for you, but this you cannot ask of me. I will see Pike dead. And if the Romulans stand in my way, they will die as well.”*

Jim wanted to scream. *“Spock, that isn’t what I want! If you need to kill Gold–Pike, whoever he is, then okay, but–but just tell them I didn’t kill Vreenak. Tell them it was Pike all along. At least give them the chance not to go to war.”*

*“It will be the Romulans’ choice, but I will tolerate their maneuvering no more. They will do precisely what I tell them to, or they will die.”*

Heart aching, Jim wracked his mind for a way to convince his bondmate. But he didn't know what else he could say. So he focused on what he could control: *“Spock, if I don't come back, promise me you'll take care of Tom and Kevin.”*

*“You will come back, Jim.”*

*“Just promise me!”*

*“Jim–”*

*“Please.”*

He could feel Spock’s reluctance to even consider the possibility, but also his conviction as he replied: *“I promise. I will always care for them, as if they were my own children. Always, Jim. But I will come for you, and then I come for all of those who seek to harm you, and I will kill every last one of them.”*

The force of his bondmate’s anger was crushing. It hurt, squeezing Jim's chest like a vice. *“Stop! Spock, please... it’s too much.”*

And then Spock’s anger was gone and Jim could breathe again as warmth and love took its place. *“I am sorry, Ashayam. I am sorry.”*

Jim let himself be wrapped in Spock's warmth and affection. But he knew that Spock had merely shielded, and that his blazing anger was not truly gone.

\*\*\*

*“Hello, Jim. Rest well?”*

Jim woke with a start, eyes darting around-but he was still blindfolded. He tried to shrink away from that voice, from that presence, but there was nowhere to go, and his blood felt frozen in his veins. Spock was immediately alert in his head, but with a silent apology Jim threw up his mental shields. The idea of Spock being there for whatever was about to happen to him was too much.

“You know, you really should be thanking me. You’re free of the Vulcan, free to be with your own kind.”

“You’re not my kind.”

“I’ll be all that’s left, when the Vulcans and Romulans are done with each other. The war is coming.”

“So you’re getting everything you wanted! You don’t need me. Just let me go.”

Jim felt the brush of Gold’s fingers on his face as he pulled off the blindfold. He couldn’t withhold a shudder, and being able to see Gold made things even worse. “I already let you go once, and I’ve regretted it ever since. But you don’t need to be afraid. I’m not going to hurt you. It’ll just be you and me again, like old times.”

“You always hurt me,” he breathed out. He hadn’t meant to say it, didn’t want Gold to know how much pain he had caused, but the words slipped out of their own volition.

“Because you fought me, Jim. Even when you did what I said, you were always fighting me.”

"And I always will. I'm not a kid anymore, and you don't have someone else to hold over my head this time," Jim replied, hating the tremor in his voice, hating that he was so afraid.

“No, you’re not a kid,” Gold said, leaning forward and letting his eyes drag slowly down Jim’s body. “But I like you this way, too.”

*It's just my body. I've been through this a hundred times. It's just one more man I don't want, one more man who isn't Spock.* As much as Jim tried to tell himself it didn’t matter, tried to convince himself it was like being at the club—it wasn’t. In that moment, Jim wasn’t the man who had sold himself at the club. He wasn’t the man who had finally felt safe and only allowed the touches of the man he chose. He was a child again, terrified, hurting, feeling as if there could never be any possible escape.

Gold chuckled and leaned forward to place his hands on Jim’s thighs. Instinct took over, and Jim twisted, kicking sharply, a move Vorik had made him practice until it became instinctive. Gold stumbled backward, exhaling sharply. For a moment he gaped, and then he began to laugh. “Oh Jim, I’m so glad the Vulcan hasn’t broken your spirit. I’m so glad that job will fall to me... again.”

White hot terror bloomed in Jim’s stomach as Gold stepped toward him again—

—And then a phone began ringing. Gold stopped and glanced behind him. “I’ll be back, Jim,” he said with a smile, and then left the room.

Jim began to shake violently.

Spock burst through his shields: *"I will protect you from this, I swear."*

Jim sobbed, curling in on himself, clinging desperately to Spock’s presence in his mind.

*“Ashayam, I am so sorry, but he will not touch you again.”*

Jim so desperately wanted to believe the words, but Spock couldn't promise that. Gold was going to come back, and do whatever he wanted to Jim, and Jim didn't know if he could actually survive it.

*“No, Jim. He will not hurt you again.”* There was such conviction in Spock's words that Jim stopped crying.

*“What?”*

*“I will take care of you. Whatever it takes.”*

A different kind of fear seeped through him.

*“Spock... What have you done?”*

*“What I had to.”*

Jim felt cold all over. *“What aren't you telling me?”*

*“Shhh Jim, it will be all right.”*

*“Tell me. Spock? Spock?!”*

# Chapter 12

## Chapter Summary

Apologies for being slow! Work got crazy... and then I got COVID :(

Spock had shielded his anger from his bondmate, who he had managed to coax into a fitful sleep, but behind those shields he allowed the rage to flow freely as he picked up the phone.

“It’s quite a situation we find ourselves in, Spock,” the Romulan Commander said.

“It is a situation of your own making.”

“Now, wait just a minute—”

“No,” Spock replied icily. “You have allowed yourself to be blinded and manipulated by Christopher Pike. He falsely told Nero that I was behind his family’s demise. He killed Vreenak and tried to frame my bondmate. I have obviously put too much trust in you, allowed you too much leeway, if you can so easily become a puppet.”

There was a beat of silence on the other end, and Spock felt a delicious twist of satisfaction in his gut: the Commander was surprised that Spock knew about Pike. “I will require proof of Pike’s involvement in Vreenak’s death.”

“Providing you with proof is not my concern,” Spock snapped.

“Now, that isn’t fair—”

“How long have we known each other, Commander?”

“I-I’ve known you your whole life.”

“And have I ever failed to keep my word?”

“No, you haven’t, but—”

“Then you can trust my word now. This, I swear to you: I will not stand for any more of your games. Perhaps you were simply incapable of controlling Nero. Perhaps you thought his boldness would allow you to seize more power for yourself. I do not care. Nero is dead, and Christopher Pike will follow. If you stand in my way, if you try to punish my bondmate for Pike’s deeds, if you try to move against the Vulcans, then I will see the House of Karzan wiped from the streets of this city. Nowhere will be safe for you. I trust I make myself clear.”

“Yes,” the Commander whispered, and Spock was pleased at the fear in his voice. “Yes, you do.”

“Now tell me: where is Christopher Pike?”

“I don’t know. I swear to you, Spock.”

“How is such a thing possible?”

“He’s an ally. He doesn’t work for me.”

Spock scoffed. “Pathetic. Do you know Pike’s goal, Commander? He desires war between our two houses. He seeks to weaken us both so as to seize power for himself. Whether or not that war happens is your choice. But he has also miscalculated badly, because the House of Surak would easily win any war. Your very existence in this city, the power you hold, has all been what I have allowed you. And if you cross me now, Commander, I will take it back and see you and your House dead.”

He did not wait for an answer before hanging up the phone.

There was a part of him that wanted nothing more than to act, now, against the Romulans. To rain down terror upon them. But his bondmate’s voice echoed in his mind: *Spock, that isn’t what I want! At least give them the chance not to go to war.* It was not what Jim wanted, and on some level he was right: it was not the strategic thing to do, either. Destroying the Romulans would not return Jim to him.

Besides, the action he was about to take would weaken his position considerably in the eyes of his enemies. The Romulan Commander was frightened of him, certainly, but he was also a master strategist and opportunist. And so despite what he had told the Commander, he began to put plans into motion. He made several phone calls, and then summoned Vorik to his side. When Vorik had left, T’Pring was there waiting for him.

“You cannot do this,” she said, expression determined, voice fierce.

“It is already done.”

“It is *not* done. You are still here.”

“If we are able to locate Jim in time, then I will not need to go through with it. If not, then my decision is made.”

“Do you believe Pike will kill Jim?”

It would perhaps have been prudent to lie, but Spock did not wish to. “No, I do not. But he will harm my bondmate in other ways. Unacceptable ways.”

T’Pring’s gaze searched his face for a moment, and then understanding dawned. “Spock, it is a terrible thing, of course, but—”

“No.” Spock rose from behind his desk. “I will not allow it, T’Pring. He has suffered enough, and I swore to keep him safe. I have failed him twice over. I cannot allow this to happen.”

“And what would you have us do, without you?”

“Carry on. Pike knows the House of Surak will not follow his orders, but he is foolish enough to think that without me, it will be brought to its knees.” Spock allowed himself a cold smile. “That is because he does not understand us. And because he does not understand the bond. I will still be with you, in every way that matters.”

“Not in every way,” T’Pring protested. “Our power *is* weakened without you. Everyone knows you are our leader. Our best hope of avoiding war is the power you wield over the Romulans.”

“Perhaps, but if that is the only thing holding them back, it will be an uneasy peace indeed. We must find our way to true peace, now, or we must suffer war.” Spock knew he was right in this. But it wasn’t the whole truth, either. Perhaps he owed it to her, his most trusted lieutenant after Jim himself: “I must do this, T’Pring, whatever the cost. But I do not believe it will be too high for us to pay.”

“And if the price is your life, Spock?”

“Then so be it.”

T’Pring’s posture did not slump—she was too elegant for that—but Spock could see the defeat in her eyes all the same. “Tell me what you have planned.”

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Jim drifted back into consciousness, knowing that something was wrong but briefly unable to grasp what it was. And then it all came flooding back: the horrible situation he found himself in.

With a jolt, Jim realized that he was not alone, that Pike was standing in the room, watching him with an inscrutable expression. “Well, Jimmy boy, it seems like the most enjoyable part of our reunion is going to have to wait.”

“What do you mean?” Jim asked, hating the way his voice wavered.

“Turns out takin’ you here was one of the smartest moves I’ve ever made. You see, Spock cares for you so much, he’s going to take your place.”

Jim’s blood ran cold. He was going through all this to protect his bondmate, and while Pike might hurt him, he could *kill* Spock. Through the bond, he screamed: “*Spock, don’t do this!*”

“*Do you not understand? I swore to protect you, and that comes before anything.*”

“*I chose this risk! It was my decision to go. Please don’t do this, please.*”

“*It does not matter. You have been hurt too many times, and I will not let it happen again.*”



*“You can’t do this, you can’t! What happens to the balance of power with you gone?!”*

“You see, without him,” Pike continued, unaware of the bondmates’ conversation, “There’s no way in hell the Romulans won’t seize the opportunity for the war to start.”

And God, Pike was *right*. The Romulans were afraid of Spock. Without him in power, and without Stonn who had been by his side for so long, they would think they had the perfect opening.

*“Spock, there’s no way there won’t be a war if you’re held captive!”*

*“We will win a war if it begins, Jim. We will find and destroy Pike. But I cannot do this before he hurts you, and that is unacceptable to me.”*

*“I’m begging you, Spock, please don’t do this, please.”*

*“You cannot ask me to let you suffer.”*

Desperation flooded him. Everything was crumbling. There was going to be a war. Everything they’d worked for would end. And Spock was delivering himself into the hands of their enemy. The very idea of Spock being hurt made tears of terror and anger spring to his eyes.

*“What if he hurts you? If he kills you?”*

*“I would rather die than see you suffer, Jim.”*

“No! I don’t want to trade places with him!”

Pike smirked. “I know you’re sorry to be leaving me so soon, but unfortunately his condition is that I can’t touch you. Not that I much care for his rules, but I’m afraid there isn’t time for it, and there’s a good chance they’d be able to tell. Still, you don’t need to worry. When this is all over, I’ll find you again, Jim. And then it’ll be you and me, and nothing will tear us apart.”

“No...” *“No!”*

# Chapter 13

## Chapter Summary

I am so very sorry for the long wait! But I am committed to getting this one over the finish line in the next few weeks! <3 <3 <3

*“Spock, please! I can endure whatever he does to me, I promise. Just please don’t do this.”*

*“My decision on this matter is final. I swore to protect you, Jim. I will keep that promise.”*

*“That’s not what that promise meant! We both knew the risk I was taking on when I went to that meeting!”*

*“This is what it meant to me.”*

*“Spock, I’m begging you.”*

*“I would do anything for you, Jim. Anything but allow you to suffer.”*

*“Please... I can’t let you die for me. Please, please don’t...”*

Spock felt ill; the bond shuddered under the force of Jim’s terrified pleas. He could bear it no more, and cast a gentle shield between him. It muted Jim’s protests, but he would still hear if the human cried out in greater distress.

“Sir, there is a human at the gates. He claims to be a friend of Jim’s.”

Spock wanted nothing to do with any new arrival. “What is his name?”

“Leonard McCoy.”

The name gave him pause. McCoy, or “Bones” as Jim often called him, was Jim’s best friend and personal doctor. Spock did not like the idea of another man being close to his bondmate—but he had come to accept McCoy’s place in Jim’s life.

“Let him in. I will speak to him in the courtyard.”

Cold wind whipped Spock’s jacket as he approached the man. Spock hated the cold.

“Where’s Jim?” McCoy demanded without preamble when Spock approached him. He had a somewhat rough appearance, but there was genuine concern in his eyes.

Spock had already elected to tell him the truth: “Jim has been taken captive.”

The sky rumbled overhead. The blue eyes widened. “Captive? By whom?”

“What matters is that he will soon be returned here safely. You should remain, and tend to any injuries he may have suffered.”

“I’ll come with you!” McCoy insisted gruffly.

Spock shook his head. “I cannot allow that.”

“Hey, I’m good in a fight!”

A smattering of raindrops fell.

“There will be no fight. I am taking Jim’s place to ensure his release.”

McCoy looked startled. “You *what*?”

This human was exasperating. “Do you require that I repeat myself?”

McCoy was looking at him like he’d grown a second head. “Well, I’ll be damned.”

Spock had no further time for this, and turned for the car.

“Spock!” McCoy called after him.

“Yes?”

“Looks like I was wrong about you. I guess Jim really does mean something to you.”

Spock looked back at him coldly, eyes narrowed. “He is my bondmate. He means everything to me.”

The sky opened—and the rain began to pour down on them.

The chill seemed to reach to his bones immediately, but he could not bring himself to take any action to get warm as they drove; not when he already felt so bereft.

He had not been so alone since the bond formed. Jim had become so completely integral to him—not just his presence in Spock’s life but also in Spock’s mind. It warmed him from the inside out, from some central place inside him that had been cold so long he’d nearly forgotten its existence.

He knew that turning himself over to Christopher Pike was a severe risk, not only for himself but for his Vulcans, a risk that T’Pring rightfully disapproved of. It would embolden his enemies, perhaps even bring war to their doorsteps.

But he also knew that those enemies had grown too comfortable with peace. They underestimated the power held by the House of Surak. And while many feared him particularly, outsiders did not truly understand Vulcans. His House had only grown stronger since Stonn’s betrayal and Jim’s induction into the fold. The House of Surak would survive.

But Spock himself... there was no guarantee of that.

Soon, a blindfold was across his face, as was their agreement. He closed his eyes, and tried not to wonder if he would ever be able to hold Jim in his arms again.

\*\*\*

Jim was practically shaking as he slid into the car's backseat and T'Pol put the car in gear to take him home. God, he hadn't wanted this to happen. He hadn't wanted *any* of this to happen! The emotions rolled over him in waves: terror, anger, heartbreak. He *hated* the small part of himself that felt overwhelming relief at being freed of Gold, when Spock was now captive in his place.

What if the Vulcan died? Jim wasn't entirely sure he could survive it. He might crumble from the inside out, from the place where he was connected to Spock.

The rain pounded against the windshield for most of the drive, but finally began to peter out as they drove up the hill to the compound. When they finally pulled into the courtyard and Jim stepped out into the drizzle, his eyes widened at the sight that greeted him: Bones, running up to the car.

"Jim! Are you all right?!"

"Bones," he whispered, and then the tears began to fall; he nearly collapsed, but Bones caught him.

"Hey, hey... it's gonna be okay, now. You're safe, Jim."

"Gold has Spock. He turned himself over to a crazy killer," Jim whispered, feeling horribly unworthy of such a sacrifice.

"I know, darlin'. C'mon, let's get you inside."

The tears continued to stream down his cheeks as Bones gently installed him in the living room and checked him over, demanding a cup of hot tea from one of the Vulcans, who seemed baffled by this human's presence but obeyed his demands.

"I begged him not to go through with it, but he wouldn't listen."

Bones was rubbing his back gently. "I know, Jim, I know. But he did this to keep you safe, yeah? I guess I didn't give him enough credit."

"Jim!" Tom's voice cut through his malaise, and the two children barreled into him. Jim wrapped them in a tight hug. This was one more thing Spock had given him: safety for the two children he loved more than life itself.

Another voice interrupted the moment: "Are you injured, Jim?" There was no warmth in T'Pring's words, not that he would have expected any.

"I'm fine."

“Then you must come with us. It is time to make arrangements.”

“What arrangements?” Bones asked.

One elegant eyebrow arched on T’Pring’s face; she kept her gaze focused on Jim, who stared back at her.

He didn’t know if he was ready to be a full part of the House of Surak—but it didn’t really matter if he was ready or not. “It’s okay, Bones.”

“Kid...”

“Not a kid,” Jim replied softly, and gave his friend a tight smile. “Not anymore. Tom, Kevin, stay with Bones, okay?” He gave them each a kiss on the forehead, and then stood to follow T’Pring out of the room, ignoring the fact that he could feel his friend’s eyes burning holes in his back.

“We face two challenges,” T’Pring said as they walked. “Spock is held captive by Christopher Pike. And the Romulans, who were already considering war, will be emboldened by this move. Pike likely surmises that he need not take any further action to ensure that the war begins, and hopes to merely sit back and collect power when it is over.”

“What do we do?”

T’Pring stopped walking and fixed him with a rather withering look. “Even now, and as long as he is able to direct us, we follow Spock. Has he said nothing?”

“I... he’s shielding,” Jim whispered.

Her eyes narrowed. “Why would he be doing that?”

“I.. I was begging him not to go through with it.”

T’Pring’s face actually softened slightly. “Jim, Spock has potentially sacrificed everything for you. What is done is done. But he has need of you now. And so do we.”

Jim felt sick. She was absolutely right. How many times had Spock been there, in Jim’s mind, right where Jim needed him? And now that Spock was the one in danger, Jim had offered him nothing.

His eyes slid closed as he reached out with the bond: “*Spock, I’m so sorry. I’m here. I’m not going anywhere.*” He flooded their connection with everything he felt for Spock, and could *feel* the shuddered breath Spock took as their bond sizzled to life.

“*Jim, my Jim,*” the Vulcan whispered in his mind.

Jim cradled him close, tears springing to his eyes. “*I’m so sorry, Spock... I’m so sorry. Thank you, for saving me.*”

*"I will always save you. And you need never apologize. You are here with me. That is all that matters."*

*"I'm so scared I'm going to lose you."*

*"You will not. We will prevail, I promise."*

*"I love you."* He'd never said the words before, had scarcely allowed himself to think them, but to do so now felt as natural as breathing.

The joy that burst along the bond made him feel dizzy in the best possible way. *"I love you, too, Jim. We will get through this, together."*

For most of Jim's life, he would not have trusted these words. But he could feel Spock's love wrapped around him like armor. If he was honest with himself, he had felt it for some time.

His eyes fluttered open, and T'Pol was looking at him knowingly. "Come."

Amanda, Vorik, and a handful of others were gathered around the table waiting for them: the generals of the House of Surak. He had never seen them so somber. A shiver ran through him as they all looked to him, but his bondmate's presence surge in his mind. He was not facing this alone. "All right. We need to rescue Spock—and we need to stop a war."

# Chapter 14

## Chapter Summary

Thank you williamspockspeare for encouraging me to write this chapter the way I envisioned it, even though it involves some POV that isn't Jim's or Spock's!

When Vorik entered the room, Jim knew from the look on his face that the agonizing wait was over. Vorik's words confirmed it: "The Romulan Commander has asked for an audience. Thursday night."

Jim knew, even before he heard Spock's voice in his mind, exactly what this meant: "*That is when they will strike.*" The days of information gathering and preparing were coming to an end. On Thursday night, it would be time to put their plan to the test.

But while the Vulcans' extensive network had yielded a great deal of useful information, it had not allowed them to locate Pike and Spock, mostly because they kept moving locations. Spock was always blindfolded, and thus unable to provide any information as to where they were. Thankfully, Pike hadn't hurt his bondmate... not yet, anyway.

"We should all go: T'Pring, Vorik, and I."

Jim felt his bondmate's frustration and fear at the very idea of Jim putting himself back in danger, but Jim's response was firm: "*If you think I'm going to sit home, you're out of your mind. Would you sit on the sidelines while I was in danger?*"

Out loud, he continued: "If the three of us go, then the Romulan Commander won't suspect anything, and we'll be better equipped to rescue Spock." They believed that with Spock captive, there was no reason for the Romulans to hide their alliance with Pike. And since Pike was keeping Spock close, Jim was fervently hoping that he would be nearby during their meeting.

The thought of facing Pike again so soon after he'd escaped made him feel sick to his stomach, but Jim wasn't about to let anyone stand in his way.

T'Pring and Vorik agreed, and then Jim turned to Amanda. She was typically very quiet in these meetings, but her support was crucial, especially with Spock gone. Her eyes were shining with tears—tears that Jim didn't think she would ever let fall. "Bring my son back to me."

Jim swallowed around the lump in his throat; that was the least secure part of their plan. But there was still only one answer he could give: "We will."

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“Are you sure about this?” Bones whispered.

There was a time, perhaps not so long ago, when Jim would not have been sure. But no part of him doubted his place now. The House of Surak was his House, too. It was the Vulcans who had become his found family. It was the children he loved. And above all, it was Spock. Spock who had put himself in grave danger to rescue Jim. Spock who now needed rescuing in turn.

“One hundred percent.”

Bones nodded a little, as if he expected this answer. “Come back safe, Jim. You and the hobgoblin both.”

A mirthless laugh escaped his lips. “Don’t let the Vulcans hear you call him that. You’ll look after the kids for me?”

“You know I will.”

Jim gave his friend a fierce hug, and then they were off, weaving through the city streets to the Rigelian restaurant they’d agreed to meet at. It was as close to neutral territory as things came.

*“We’re on the move.”*

Jim’s breath caught in his throat. As always, Spock gave as much information as he could about where he was headed—and Jim felt his heart begin to race as they pulled up to the restaurant. “Spock is close,” he whispered aloud, and as he said it he was *sure*. God, how Jim wanted to get to him!

But that also meant that Pike was here. Jim took a deep breath, feeling the calm descend. He could do this. He had to do this.

When he walked into the room, the sight of Pike’s smirking face hit him low in the gut. “Jim, glad to see you again so soon.”

The instinctive terror that prickled along his spine wasn’t a surprise, but he felt Spock in his mind, and T’Pring’s hand light as a feather on his wrist. His eyes went to her, and then to Vorik, and he reminded himself that he was not alone. He was not the helpless child whom Pike had tormented. It felt like his bondmate was coursing through his very veins as he replied coldly: “Pike. Commander.”

“Mr. Kirk, let us sit down,” said the Commander. He was a formidable Romulan: tall, muscular, aged but unbent. Jim felt acute fury at the sight of him. He’d had the opportunity to simply accept their terms and have peace assured. Instead, he had chosen war. And he’d had the nerve to invite the House of Surak’s leadership to meet at the same time that he launched his attack—no doubt to expound on his victories and demand concessions. “We are indeed sorry that it has come to this, but your attack on Vreenak has left us with little choice.”

“I did not attack Vreenak. He was poisoned by your ally, Christopher Pike.”



“Now, let’s not go hurling accusations, hm?” Pike cut in.

The Commander continued as if neither of them had spoken: “I am aware, of how long the House of Surak has ruled this city. But things have changed with Spock’s capture, and with other events that are taking place tonight. Once I have explained them to you, I believe that you will see the need for the House of Surak to agree to our terms.”

Jim leaned forward, and bared his teeth. “No.”

The Commander blinked. “Excuse me?”

“There will be no terms, not from you.”

“I don’t think you understand.”

“Then tell me.”

“At this very moment, a contingent of Romulans is taking control of the port; we will—”

“Own the traffic coming in and out of the city? I don’t think so.”

*Across the city, the Romulan beckoned his group to follow; everything was going exactly according to plan. They had brought enough firepower to overwhelm the Vulcan force that would be guarding the port—after all, there was no way the Vulcans would be expecting an attack. Not here.*

*But as he stepped out from the alleyway, a bright light blinded his vision. He hissed, throwing his hand up over his eyes.*

*“Don’t move a muscle, or we shoot. Drop your weapons.”*

*The Romulan obeyed. Slowly, his eyes adjusted enough to see the spread of police cars in front of him. A man in uniform stepped forward. “I’m Chief of Police Hikaru Sulu, and you are under arrest.”*

*“For what crime?” the Romulan demanded.*

*“I wouldn’t worry about it if I was you. All you need to know is that you’re going to be spending a very long time in jail.”*

“What’s *actually* happening right now,” Jim said, “Is that the Romulans won’t get anywhere near the Vulcans guarding the port. They’ve all been arrested. Did you forget that we own the police?”

The Commander looked truly startled, and Jim felt a surge of victory. “That is not all,” the Commander said. “Right at this moment, my most trusted deputy is sitting down with the deputy of the House of Kahless to discuss—”

“A more powerful alliance between your two peoples?” Jim broke in, and relished the shock on the Commander’s face.

*The Romulan deputy sat across from the Klingons, a small smile on his face. He did not think much of Klingons, but then again, if they could help defeat the Vulcans, they would be worth tolerating—for a time. “We have come to offer you a formal alliance.”*

*B’Elanna Torres laughed coldly. “And why would I agree to that?”*

*The deputy blinked; that wasn’t the answer he was expecting. “Because... it will allow us all to be out from under the Vulcans.”*

*“I am not under anyone,” B’Elanna shot back. “You, on the other hand...”*

*The doors sprang open, and Klingons armed with shotguns surrounded them.*

*“What is the meaning of this?! We came to parlay.”*

*“No, you came to be apprehended for betraying the House of Surak. Have you already forgotten that Nero attacked us as a prelude to your little war? You really think we would forgive and forget so easily? You’ll be staying here for the time being. But don’t worry: if there is to be a war, I’m sure it will be very short.”*

“Your deputy is right now being held at gunpoint, and he’ll be the Klingons’ guest until I decide otherwise.” The Klingons still believed Spock would prevail, and they were still angry at the Romulans for their transgressions. Add to that Vorik’s growing relationship with B’Elanna, and the Vulcan alliance with the Klingons was secure.

The Commander looked livid now; he abruptly stood, slamming his fists on the table. “My forces are even now taking control of your largest warehouse!”

*Vulcan fists and feet flew, knocking back the Romulan attackers. A hail of bullets fell; the Vulcans were more than prepared for such an attack, and in short order their attackers fled. All across the city, in the places the Romulans had planned to attack, the Vulcans were ready for them.*

“Well that, we simply handled ourselves.”

The Commander’s expression faltered, and satisfaction twisted in Jim’s gut. “It does not matter that Spock is held captive. The House of Surak controls this city. No one else.”

God, it was a rush. Jim finally understood the power Spock had granted him, power beyond anything he had ever imagined. He had been at the mercy of others for so long—and now he stood at the head of the most powerful force in the city. Later he would probably question how right this felt, but for now he was only interested in preparing for the final blow: “It really is quite sad that you allowed yourself to be seduced by Christopher Pike’s fantasy that you could control all, when he was only using you to start a war that would advance his own power at the expense of yours. Especially when he is such a weak man. You should have known that when he asked you to cover up crimes at the Tarsus Orphanage—for who but a weak man would pray on children?” To speak these words, to speak the name of Tarsus without fear, it healed something inside him that had been broken for so long. “You are lucky

we do not wipe the House of Karzan off the map. But the war you began tonight, Commander, is already over."

"You started this when you killed Vreenak!" the Commander hissed.

"Except I *didn't* kill Vreenak." Jim turned to T'Pring, who placed a folder on the table and slid it over to the Commander.

The Commander pulled out the proof, courtesy of Uhura: a grainy photograph of Christopher Pike in a shop, and the receipt for the poison he had purchased himself. His arrogance was truly astounding. The Romulan's eyes went wide, and then his face contorted in fury as he turned to Pike. "*You!*" He struck, but Pike was there to meet him, a knife flashing in his hand, leaving a line of green blood on the Romulan's arm.

Jim felt himself being yanked backward and pushed to the ground, Vorik and T'Pring protectively over him. The rapid fire of gunfire was painfully loud in the small room, and Jim's heart leapt into his throat.

And then, silence. After a beat, T'Pring helped Jim up. The human who'd been escorting Pike was dead; the Vulcan guard behind them had his gun raised. "He attempted to shoot."

No one else was hurt-but Pike was gone. "Spock is close—we have to go after him, *now!*"

# Chapter 15

## Chapter Summary

Warning for violence in this chapter (though hopefully that's not a surprise anymore!)

Can't believe we're almost done with this one!

Through the bond, Spock was with Jim as he faced down the Romulan Commander and Christopher Pike. A surge of pride went through him at the way his mate was handling the situation. Perhaps Jim did not realize it yet, but he had truly become Spock's second. Finally, his enemies would understand what Spock already knew: it did not matter that he was a prisoner, the House of Surak would always be stronger than any other. Surak and all who had come after him—including Sarek, including Spock himself—had made sure of it.

But none of that negated the danger Jim was in, and it was agony to be blindfolded and tied to a chair rather than with his mate, keeping him safe. When the negotiation room broke into chaos, Spock's heart leapt into his throat. He could not breathe until the dust settled and Jim's presence remained strong in his mind. *"We're coming, Spock! Hang on!"*

A few moments later, the door swung open, but the footsteps that echoed on the floor were not those of his bondmate. "C'mon, we've gotta get outta here," Pike growled to the two men who were guarding him.

The Vulcans would be close behind him. House of Surak spies outside the restaurant would make sure of it. And while Spock hated the idea of Jim throwing himself into yet another dangerous situation, he knew he could not stop him. As his bondmate came closer, Spock could sense him—more acutely than ever before. His heart rejoiced at the proximity, even as his mind feared for his human's safety.

The men untying Spock from the chair were careless in their rush. The bonds were too loose. Jim was so close now. A few more steps—

—But then Spock felt a rough hand on his shoulder, yanking him closer. The barrel of a gun pressed against his temple. "Don't move, or I'll kill him!"

"Don't shoot." Jim's voice had only the slightest waver.

"Jimmy boy, I'm beginning to think you're more trouble than you're worth." There was genuine fury in Pike's voice; it was the voice of a cornered animal—defeated, but still dangerous. "But now that we're all reunited, you, Spock, and I are getting the hell out of here."

*“Jim, stall: I only need twenty seconds. T’Pring and Vorik will know what to do.”* Spock could sense where Pike’s men were in the room, and knew they were unlikely to be looking at his hands behind his back. Moving carefully so as not to alert Pike to what he was doing, he began to work his way out of the too-loose ropes.

Spock could feel Jim’s fear—fear for Spock. But he also knew his bondmate was too brave to let his fear stop him. “Pike, you’ve lost. It’s over. Just let him go.”

“Oh, we’re just getting started. Pity that after all that work, the Romulans turned out to be a dead end. But there’s always another way.”

“Just let him go, and we go our separate ways.”

*“Now!”*

Spock dropped like a stone, ripping himself free of the bonds. Gunshots rang out as Spock tore the blindfold from his eyes. T’Pring and Vorik had their guns raised. Pike’s men—and his gun—were on the floor. The gunfire stopped, the Vulcans clearly too afraid of hitting Spock.

But it was the opening Pike needed: his face contorted in rage as he lunged at Jim.

The fury Spock had forced down roared inside him, the desire he had felt since learning what this man had done to his bondmate.

He seized Christopher Pike—and snapped his neck.

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The next few hours passed almost in a daze. There were things to do, of course: ensuring that all their plans had come to fruition (they had); demanding the Romulans accept terms and grant concessions to the Vulcans (they did); and asking the Klingons to agree to an even stronger partnership (they would). In the end, tonight had cemented the House of Surak’s primacy for years to come.

And through it all, there was only one thing Spock truly wanted: it beat through him like a pulse—the desire, the *need* to be in Jim’s arms again. Heat bubbled up inside him, rising toward a boiling point. And now, finally, he had stripped off their clothing and could hold Jim close, human skin cool against Vulcan fire. Spock never wanted to let him go.

Jim held him just as tightly, and whispered words of affection into Spock’s neck: “I’m so glad you’re okay. I was so scared he’d hurt you, so scared I’d lose you.”

Spock ran his fingers through his bondmate’s hair, intoxicated by the feel of him, soaking in Jim’s love and concern. He always loved touching Jim, but now he simply could not get enough. He did not know how he could ever sate the craving awakening beneath his skin. “You will never lose me.”

“And I was scared... that he’d somehow get a hold of me again, that he’d hurt me—the way he did before.”

“He will never hurt you again, Jim. He will never hurt *anyone* again. And he will not orchestrate any more violence. It's all over.”

A soft sob escaped Jim’s lips. “God, it really is, isn’t it?”

“Yes, I promise you.” Spock cupped Jim’s face, tilting his head so he could kiss those sweet lips. Spock wanted to take his human, body and mind and soul, but he fought down the urge; it was surprisingly difficult, but clearly Jim needed to talk. His gaze found his bondmate's vibrant blue. “Our position is more secure than ever. Everyone has seen that an attack against us is futile. And they have seen that this is true even when I am not there. You have taken the place that belongs to you, Jim, at my side.”

Jim's eyes studied his. "You've given me so much power, Spock. Just like you said you would."

“Yet you are afraid of it,” Spock surmised.

“Yes,” Jim admitted softly. "After being powerless for so long, it felt... it felt good. Really good."

“Do you remember what you told me, when you wanted to learn Suus Mahna? You wanted the power to protect those you care about. *That* is why you accepted my offer to become more involved in the House of Surak. So that you could defend those you love. And you have wielded power to that end.”

“I—I guess you’re right.”

“Generally, yes,” Spock replied, eliciting a huff from Jim. “That is why I embraced my power as well, that is why the House of Surak *exists*. But we have done much more than that. Together, we stopped a war. I cannot eschew violence entirely, but with you at my side, we will use it sparingly.”

Jim's smile never failed to make his heart beat faster. “We did stop a war, didn't we? I still can't really believe it all worked.. I'll be honest, Spock. I don’t know if I’m ready for everything that comes with being your second, but I’m willing to try. And the truth is... I’m tired of being afraid of this.”

"You do not need to be afraid, ever again." Spock’s heart sang. His hand cupped the back of Jim's neck as he pulled him into a deep kiss, and finally gave in to his desires to slide inside Jim's body and mind, to let his entire consciousness be filled with his bondmate. Jim was everything he could ever have asked for, and Spock needed him so badly.

When he woke the next morning, however, Jim was gone. Desperation filled him, beat through every inch of his body. Something was amiss, but he did not care. All he needed now was *Jim, Jim, Jim*.

# Chapter 16

## Chapter Summary

I can't believe we've come to the end of this fic!! Thank you so much to everyone who encouraged me along the way; this verse would never have become what it has without you all. And special thanks to Williamspockspeare for inspiring one of the scenes in this chapter - it's actually the first one I wrote for this fic!

I don't plan to write any more long chapter fics in this verse (mostly because I don't want to keep torturing them lol) and will be marking the series complete, but I may have a few more one-shots/slice of mob life pieces coming eventually!

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Jim was surprised to wake up and find Spock still asleep; Spock never slept in, and Vulcans needed less sleep than humans in general. He must be truly exhausted from his ordeal. Jim studied his sleeping face, the elegant upsweep of his brows, the high cheekbones. He was truly stunning. And thanks to him, it was all over. Pike was finally out of Jim's life forever. He was Spock's second. And they finally seemed to be on the same page about what violence was acceptable. He felt full of energy. He wanted to kiss his bondmate awake and see those dark brown eyes focus in on him.

But he really should let Spock sleep.

With a quiet sigh, he slipped out of bed and padded down the hall. It was still quite early and most of the household was asleep, but when he walked out into the cold morning air, he saw Vorik sitting cross-legged on the lawn.

"Morning."

"Jim—I'm a little surprised to see you alone this morning."

"Spock's asleep."

"Ah."

"Are you up for some sparring? No pressure, I'd understand if you were tired. I just feel like I can't sit still."

Vorik rose smoothly to his feet. "Like you, I find myself full of energy this morning. Let us spar."

Jim grinned and slipped into a fighting stance. They began to circle each other.

“You were very impressive last night, Jim.”

“Thanks. You’re still going to kick my ass though, aren’t you?”

“It is likely.”

Jim laughed—and Vorik struck. Jim raised his arm to defend, and then gasped as a bolt of confusion and fear went through him. Vorik knocked him flat on his ass.

“Shit!”

“You must pay more attention.”

“Sorry, sorry...” Jim pushed himself to his feet, but the discomfort continued to simmer.

Vorik began to circle him again. “What is on your mind?”

Jim stepped in time with Vorik’s movements, keeping his face to the Vulcan. “I’m not sure.” Jim reached for that place in his mind that held the bond, but it felt cloudy, obscured, confused. “It feels like—”

Vorik struck, catching Jim off guard and slamming him to the ground. “Hey!”

“I told you to pay attention. Now, what is troubling you?” Vorik asked, still holding him down.

“I don’t really know but... uh...” His eyes widened as Spock’s presence suddenly roared into his mind, seeming to suffuse his entire being. Jim knew instinctively that he was coming closer, just as he’d felt Spock’s pull the night before, but it was so *strong*.

Before he could voice any of this, Vorik was ripped away and thrown to the ground. Jim rolled over to see Spock’s hands around Vorik’s throat.

“Spock, what the hell are you doing?” Scrambling to his feet, he tried to pull Spock off the other Vulcan, but it was like trying to move a stone statue. “Let him go!”

“He dared lay his hands on you!”

“We were just sparring! Spock, *stop!*”

Finally, the Vulcan’s hands loosened. Vorik coughed and rolled away to get to his feet. He glanced between them, eyes widening in some sort of realization, and then took off at a run.

“What’s gotten into you?” Jim demanded.

Spock’s eyes snapped to his—and then in one swift motion he was crushing Jim to him, kissing him brutally, tongue invading his mouth.



Jim felt dizzy. The bond between them was saturated with lust so powerful that Jim felt ready to let the Vulcan take him right then and there, but something was definitely wrong. He tried to pull away, but Spock growled and held him more tightly, keeping his mouth sealed over Jim's.

"*Spock?*" Jim tried through their bond.

Spock froze, and then pulled away so fast Jim's head spun. His eyes were wide. "Come to the bedroom in five minutes." With that, he was gone.

Jim stared after him, utterly baffled, but obeyed the instructions. When he arrived, Spock had handcuffed one of his wrists to the bed frame. His eyes were closed, so he did not see that Jim was gaping at him.

"What in the hell, Spock?"

Spock *lunged*, but the handcuff caught him. Jim took an involuntary step back. For a moment, the Vulcan's eyes looked positively crazed. But then some semblance of calm returned and he sat back on the bed.

"I am in my time."

"Your... *oh.*" This is what had happened to Vorik. The conversation they'd had when he decided to stay with Spock came flooding back to him, the word that had once sent a shiver down his spine: *When my time comes, our bond will become unbreakable.* "It's... now?"

"Yes. It has likely been brought on early by the stress of the last few days. But why is not important. We do not have much time. If you do not want to be mine forever, you must flee now. Get as far away as you can. Do not return for at least two weeks. My mother will care for the children until your return."

The enormity of what Spock was saying hit him. "You'd let me go?"

"I do not want to," Spock grit out, as if every word was a struggle. He closed his eyes, face anguished. "There was a time when I would not have, but I *love* you. Far too much to keep you here against your will. Too much to bind you to me permanently if it is not what you want. Jim, please—if you wish to go, go *now.*"

Spock had promised that everything about their relationship was Jim's choice, his to accept or refuse. But Jim had always known that in truth, Spock could do whatever he wanted, and there was little Jim could do to stop him.

And now, in his time of desperate need, Spock was proving that his words were true: it *was* Jim's choice. He was free to do as he liked. He could walk away.

And he had absolutely no desire to. Looking at Spock, he felt safe, in spite of the awful threats they'd faced. He felt hope for the future, after having spent so long simply trying to survive. And he felt love—Spock's, and his own. He wanted this life, all of it. Everything Spock had to offer.

“Where’s the key?”

“On the dresser.”

Jim grabbed it and stepped closer; Spock's eyes tracked him—hungry, wild, but still tender. “How could you think I would abandon you now?” He straddled Spock’s lap, reaching for his handcuffed wrist. “Spock, I’m *already* yours. And you’re *mine*.” The lock clicked, the handcuff falling open.

With a cry of triumph, Spock grabbed Jim and flipped him onto his back, kissing him desperately. Jim instinctively arched against him, the bond lighting up with joy. Strong hands tore at his clothing, and Jim tried to sit up to help Spock get them off, but the Vulcan growled and he went still. It did not take long for Spock to get him naked and begin working him open with slick fingers, fingers that knew exactly how to reduce him to a pleading mess. But the physical touch almost didn’t matter. As lust ricocheted along the bond, Spock’s desperation rapidly became his own. He had never needed anything as badly as he needed Spock. “Fuck me, Spock. Please.”

“Yes,” Spock hissed, raising his hips and pushing inside in one sharp movement. Almost immediately Spock exploded, and the burst of pleasure in his mind was so strong that Jim came with him untouched, so hard he nearly blacked out. “You’re mine,” Spock rasped, still fucking him hard and deep. “You have always been mine. I will take you over and over, Jim, until you forget everyone else who has ever touched you. Until you cannot even remember their names. You will be mine forever. My human, my bondmate, *mine*.”

Jim whimpered as Spock’s cock hit perfectly inside him with every thrust.

“Tell me,” Spock demanded. “Tell me whom you belong to.”

“I’m yours, Spock. All yours.”

Spock’s hand wrapped around his cock, and they both came again, the pleasure wracking through them.

“I must have you again,” Spock moaned out.

“Yes,” Jim whispered, and surrendered to the tide.

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A glass pressed to his lips, and Jim gratefully drank the cool water. His throat felt parched.

“Are you all right?”

His eyes blinked open to see Spock looking down at him with concern. Every inch of him was sore, bone-weary, but he felt *good*. This felt right. And Spock had clearly cleaned them and propped Jim up comfortably on a pile of pillows. “I’m fine, just tired. It’s over?”

“Yes. Thank you for seeing me through it.”

“Did you really think I might not?”

“I hoped. When it comes to you, I have always hoped. And now, at last, you are truly mine.”

“I think I’ve always been yours. And you’ve always been mine.”

“Yes, Jim. Always.”

Spock kissed him, slow and sweet, and for perhaps the first time in his life, Jim had nothing to fear.

## Chapter End Notes

Thank you so very much for reading!!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!