

Searching the Stars

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Searching the Stars

by [lovers_in_japan_reign_of_love_1](#)

Summary

Every little decision we ever make affects the outcome of our reality more than we know. This is one such instance.

Notes

Title: Searching the Stars

Welcome to my very first story here on AO3. I know there are plenty of Jim/OFC stories out there, but I hope you'll give mine a try.

This story starts with the 2009 reboot. I'll try to continue with "Into Darkness" and "Beyond," but with them being their own separate stories, if that makes sense. I'll follow the main plot points of the movies, but there will be some of my own twists and changes in it as well, to create some unpredictability. I also drew some inspiration from TOS too. Moreover, I'll make some adjustments regarding the dialogues of the characters and of certain happenings, etc. so you won't be re-reading everything that was said and done. Lastly, I will be coming back from time to time to do some editing where I feel it's needed. If you see anything, don't hesitate to let me know.

I don't own Star Trek, only my OC Rosa.

Prologue

Deep breaths, that's what she keeps telling herself. Keep her breathing steady, and it will keep her mind off her growling stomach and injured arm. Deep breaths to keep her mind off the fact that they're low on food and medicine, and the younger kids are getting scared. Deep breaths to push down the fear she's feeling, to focus on keeping the other kids safe until Jay and Kevin get back.

Jay and Kevin have been gone since early morning. It's mid-afternoon now. She's done everything she could think of to entertain the kids. Now they're hungry and starting to realize rations are meager. Not enough for all of them, not enough to make it until the end of the day. When that realization washed over the kids, she had to watch and feel as the fear and dread came over them. Were they going to end up dead like their parents? They survived the soldiers; now starvation is going to take them out?

She felt a slight twinge in her arm, a wince coming across the eleven-year-old's features. Her left forearm was injured thanks to a soldier. It's because of her injury that medicine has been steadily declining.

God, where are Jay and Kevin? Why haven't they come back? Did the soldiers get them?

Ozzie shook her head. They promised to come back. Jay *always* promises to come back. He's never broken a single promise. And Kevin. They've already lost so many. Ozzie can't lose anyone else.

It started with the food shortage. Then the soldiers became more and more frequent. Then the shootings started. Ozzie's home had been one of many that had been stormed by the soldiers. They gunned her mother and stepfather down right in front of her, a stray bullet grazing the young girl's arm. She played dead until the soldiers left. The injury was relatively deep, and there seemed to be a lot of blood. But Ozzie was also covered in her parents' blood, so it didn't sink in right away that she was injured.

Jay had found Ozzie—he was her neighbor, her best friend. Her only friend. He saw the young girl sitting over her parents' bodies, crying. His aunt and uncle were killed, too. He didn't give himself time to grieve, not when they were still in danger. He got his friend out and took her to a hiding spot he'd found, a cave a couple of miles away from their homes. It took Ozzie a couple of minutes to realize she'd been injured. The adrenaline was starting to wear off, and her arm began to hurt. The pain snapped her back to reality. The amount of blood on her sent her into a panic.

Jay had been quick to comfort her, suggesting they clean the blood off and treat her wound—it probably wasn't that bad!, he'd said. He then suggested going back to their homes to get anything they might need, including medicine and bandages, much to his friend's horror. She wanted to go with him so neither of them would be alone, but he refused. Instead, he promised to return within the hour. And he did. Except he also came back with two other kids. Taissa O'Neill and Kevin Riley.

Opening her eyes, Ozzie took a deep breath before letting it out.

"Ozzie?" She turned at the sound of her name. The voice was small, almost scared. Five-year-old Carolina Tyler stood not even two feet from where the eleven-year-old sat; the younger girl looked pale and filthy, despite Ozzie's and Jay's best attempts at keeping all the kids clean. Hiding out in a cave would do that, she assumed.

"Hey, Carrie," Ozzie responded, her tone gentle and soothing. She motioned for the young girl to sit with her, which she did without hesitation. Ozzie gently brushed the young girl's red hair from her face, putting on her best comforting smile. "What's going on?" she asked. She started running her fingers through young girl's hair, despite the pain in her arm.

There was a long pause, one that made Ozzie's stomach lurch. Out of all the other kids, Carolina was the most talkative. She was never one to hesitate or stumble over her words. So this was a definite sign something was wrong. "Are we gonna die in here?" Carolina's voice was trembling, thick with emotion. Ozzie could see tears forming in the young girl's brown eyes. She moved closer into the older girl's embrace, an unconscious habit, hoping to find comfort in it.

Ozzie's heart immediately dropped at that. "We're not going to die in here," she said, her voice low but still gentle. "We'll be fine. I promise."

Carolina nodded, but Ozzie could still feel the five-year-old's fear and uncertainty.

Where in the hell were Jay and Kevin?

(Edited Last: June 01, 2022)

Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

Every little decision we ever make affects the outcome of our reality more than we know. This is one such instance.

Chapter Notes

Title: Searching the Stars

Thank you to everyone who's giving this story a shot! I really appreciate it.

Like I mentioned in the previous chapter, I will be coming back from time to time to do some editing where I feel it's needed. If you see anything, don't hesitate to let me know. Also, don't hesitate to leave your thoughts on how I can improve, either. Constructive criticism is always welcome!

Enjoy!

(I don't own Star Trek, only my OC Rosa.)

The bar was loud and crowded. Music blared over the laughs and chatter of the patrons, many of whom were clad in the red cadet uniforms of Starfleet Academy.

When Rosa entered the bar, far later than she anticipated, she couldn't help but smile. The bar was nearly overflowing with people talking, nursing their drinks, or calling out their orders. Tables and booths were filled to the brim, and a few bold and slightly buzzed people were dancing on the floor. It was a night to celebrate for the cadets—their last night of freedom before returning to the Academy. For the locals, a typical night out. The twenty-one-year-old was among the cadets celebrating, looking for her friends within the crowds of people. Spotting them at a far table, she greeted them before ordering her drink.

Maneuvering her way to the bar, Rosa picked up a menu and glanced over the drinks, sitting between two men.

"What can I get you tonight?" the bartender asked.

Rosa smiled at him, placing the menu down. "Hi, can I have a Budweiser Classic, please?"

With a nod, the bartender went to retrieve her drink. That brief period before the bartender returned, Rosa heard another man's voice address her—one that sounded all too familiar.

"Rosa Delgado," he exclaimed, a lightheartedness in his tone mingling with the slight slur of his words. He leaned forward just as Rosa turned her head, and she nearly jumped out of her seat. She could practically *hear* the smirk in his voice. "I thought I recognized that voice," he chuckled, a teasing glint in his eyes.

"Jim?" she exclaimed, giving a small, disbelieving laugh. When the bartender returned with her drink, Rosa let out a quick thank you before hurrying over to where her friend sat. Jim sat up, his smirk changing into a softer smile. He took her drink from her hand and placed it next to his on the bar. Letting out another laugh, Rosa threw her arms around Jim's neck to engulf him in a tight bear hug. His arms wrapped around her waist, bringing her closer. The two of them melted into the familiarity of each other's embrace. "I can't believe you're here," Rosa murmured, her voice soft.

The two pulled back, Jim's hands resting on her hips as Rosa's rested on his shoulders. "It's felt like forever since I've seen you last," he said, that soft smile still on his face.

"A year and a half."

"Crazy how time flies."

Rosa nodded, giving his shoulders a gentle squeeze. "How're you doing?" she asked. "I haven't heard from you in a while."

Jim shrugged, his gaze moving away from hers. "Fine, you know? Nothing new to report." His hands moved away from her hips as he took a step back, looking at her uniform. "And have I ever told you, you look good in red?" he teased, still not looking her in the eyes. She felt something shift in him, concerning but she tried not to let it show. Forcing out a light chuckle, Rosa gently nudged him. "Tell me, Cadet Delgado, how's medical school treating you?"

"Better now," she responded. Jim's eyebrows shot up, and he had an almost surprised look on his face. An embarrassed smile came across the twenty-one-year-old's in return. "I still can't handle blood or needles. I switched to psychology not long after our last talk."

Jim picked up his drink and took a sip with a thoughtful hum. "Psychology seems a lot more fitting," he remarked.

"I thought so too." Rosa grabbed her drink and took a sip as well. "Made more sense than being a nurse. I'm a Betazoid, I can use what I've got to help people with trauma or who just need someone to talk to, you know?"

"I'm proud of you, Rosie," he said. "I know how much this means to you."

Rosa smiled, "Thank you. That means a lot." She took another sip from her drink. The cadet let herself focus on Jim and his emotions in that moment. He was anxious, conflicted about

whether or not to bring it up. It seemed that anxiety had been festering in him for a while. As she opened her mouth, she noticed his eyes looking at something behind her—or *someone*.

"Hi. I'd like a Klabnian Fire Tea, three Miller Lite beers, no slim-shots, two Cardassian Sunrises, and anything on draft."

Rosa knew that voice; it was her close friend, Nyota Uhura. And given how quickly Jim had noticed her combined with that *look* in his eyes, the cadet knew he was going over every possible method of winning her over. Much to Rosa's disappointment.

"That's a lot of drinks for one woman," Jim said, leaning forward so Uhura could hear him. She gave him a look before looking back at the bartender.

"Jim, stop," Rosa murmured, but he brushed her off.

"And a shot of jack, straight up," Uhura added.

Knowing nothing she said would change his mind, Rosa turned to scan the tables and booths with a sigh. She again found the table where her other friends were at and made a beeline in that direction. The last thing Rosa wanted to hear was Jim attempting to flirt with another woman. Especially if that other woman was her friend.

Uhura could handle herself, though. She was confident enough in herself to handle guys like Jim. The persistent ones always looking for someone new to spend the night with. That was something Rosa admired about Uhura. Her confidence and fierce personality is what caught Rosa's attention when they first met. It's also a contrast to how the cadet saw herself. Years of unresolved trauma left Rosa critical and doubtful of herself, of everything she does.

Maybe that's why Jim never...

Shaking the thought out of her head, Rosa tried to focus instead on making it to the table and enjoying what was left of the night. Before she could even reach her destination, the sound of raised voices at the bar mingling with the overwhelming feeling of jealousy caught her attention. Turning, Rosa saw four men—other cadets—confronting Jim. She didn't know what they were saying, but one of them swung their fist and hit Jim square in the jaw. The other cadets closed in on him and started beating him and throwing him around the room.

Rosa dropped her drink and rushed over, but Uhura came over to stop her, yelling at the other cadets to stop. The men didn't listen, continuing to hit, throw and kick Jim around the room, breaking tables and glasses. They only stopped when an ear-piercing whistle came from the bar's entrance.

(Edited Last: June 04, 2022)

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Every little decision we ever make affects the outcome of our reality more than we know. This is one such instance.

Chapter Notes

Title: Searching the Stars

I don't own Star Trek, only my OCs.

Enjoy!

The bar fell silent as everyone turned in the direction of the whistle. A collective murmur and curse echoed amongst the cadets as they were met with the disapproving face of Christopher Pike.

"Outside, all of you," he ordered. When he was met with reluctance, he gave a much sharper "Now!"

A chorus of "Yes, sir" came from many of the cadets as they hurried out. Rosa lingered, her gaze going back to Jim, lying haphazardly on a table with a bruised and bloodied face. Jim had a big mouth and liked to rile people up, so these situations were commonplace. The fights were usually triggered by Jim flirting with a woman, regardless of whether she was taken. Whether she was interested or not.

Before she left for Starfleet, Rosa used to get mad whenever Jim got into altercations like that. She'd get angry and scared and scold him over being so reckless, so impulsive. Part of her still feels that, but that fear outweighs the anger now. Fear that he'll get beaten too hard one day and something will happen to him. God knows she can't imagine her life without him.

Uhura, realizing her friend wasn't following, gave a confused and slightly panicked look. "What are you doing? Come on," she exclaimed.

Rosa looked at Uhura before throwing a final, worried look Jim's way. He was unconscious, with Captain Pike standing over him.

"You go ahead," Rosa said, motioning for her to go. "I'll meet up with you later."

Uhura's confusion didn't let up, but she nodded. "Make sure you call me, okay?" she said firmly. "I'll come by and pick you up."

Rosa nodded. She watched as Uhura left, a slight sense of relief washing over her. Now, she had to convince Captain Pike to let her stay. He was struggling to get Jim in a chair when Rosa turned in their direction, so she used the opportunity to help and plead her case. The captain didn't immediately comment, but the stern look he gave didn't go unnoticed.

Once Jim was safely in a chair, his head rolling to the side and a slight groan escaping his lips, Captain Pike turned to give the cadet another stern look. He was readying himself to reprimand her for disobeying him, but the look on her face made him pause. She looked anxious, more so for the man in the chair than herself.

"Sir, if I may," Rosa started carefully, "I'd like to stay. I know him. He's my friend."

After a second of consideration, Pike nodded. "Of course, cadet...", he started.

"Lopez. Rosa Delgado Lopez."

"You can stay, Cadet Lopez," Pike said, giving an almost thankful nod. He took a seat across from Jim, looking at him almost sadly. "He might react better to a friendly face once he comes to."

Rosa nodded wordlessly before rushing around to get tissues and wipes and cleaning him up. That was easier than she expected it to be.

"What's his name?" Pike asked. He spent these last few minutes studying the cadet, how she cleaned the blood around the still-unconscious man's nose with a familiar tenderness as if she's done it before.

"Jim," she responded softly. "Jim Kirk."

The captain gave a thoughtful hum before adding, "What are you majoring in, cadet?"

"Psychology," Rosa said, cleaning a cut on Jim's forehead.

"So you're the one I've heard about," Pike stated. Rosa glanced at him, a confused expression on her face. "Are you related to Raphael Delgado-Adhara by any chance?"

"Yes, sir," she replied curtly, focusing on Jim. "He's my father."

Captain Pike nodded, noting her change in tone. "I've heard auspicious things about you from your instructors," he praised. "I look forward to working with you in the future."

"Thank you, sir," she replied. "But if it means anything, my mother is why I chose this field, not *him*."

Jim's groans ended the conversation. He lifted his head as his eyes fluttered open. "Rosie?" he mumbled, turning his head toward where he'd heard her voice. His body was tense as he regained his bearings.

"I'm right here," she said gently, touching his forearm. He instinctively relaxed under her touch. "How're you feeling?"

"Like shit," he replied, giving her a small smile. He reached for her other hand and noticed the bloodied tissue. His jaw set as he glanced at her worriedly. "I'm sorry."

"We'll talk about it later, okay?" She tried for her best smile. When his worry didn't ease up, she gently cupped his cheek. His expression softened just a fraction before he nodded. "This is Captain Pike," she said, nodding in the older man's direction and lowering her hand from her friend's face.

Jim gave the other man a quick once over before giving a curt nod, shoving some tissues in his nose.

"When Cadet Lopez told me who you were," Pike started, "I almost didn't believe her."

Jim gave the captain a distrustful look. "Who am I then, Captain?" he muttered sarcastically.

"Your father's son."

Scoffing, Jim called for a drink from the bartender.

"Jim, that's enough," Rosa remarked. "You don't need anymore to drink."

"No way in hell am I listening to any of this, even *half* sober," Jim muttered, grabbing the glass from the bartender as he came over.

Shaking her head, Rosa gathered the bloodied tissues and stood up, making her way to the nearest trash can. The two men—Captain Pike mostly—were continuing the conversation, but Rosa was in no mood to listen in. A big part of her was upset and embarrassed by her friend's behavior, but deep down, she also understood why he acted that way. Once upon a time, Rosa felt the same way. They didn't see Starfleet as their heroes when they were in the hospital all those years ago. No, it felt like Starfleet used them, used their misfortunes to make the Federation look good. News stories praising all the officers who rescued those poor children garnered nothing but distrust and anger from Rosa and Jim. The former only changed her stance when she started looking for ways to improve her life. Now she realized that "improving her life" was a partial truth; she was also trying to escape her past. What better way to do that than to join Starfleet?

Jim never forgave Starfleet, not just for what happened to them when they were younger, but for what happened to his father and his family. To Jim, everything bad that's ever happened to him was somehow connected to Starfleet. So imagine his surprise when his closest friend

declared she enrolled. The two had fought and refused to talk to each other for almost two months—the longest either went without talking to the other. It was torture. But they eventually caved and called each other, apologizing profusely and promising never to do that again.

After throwing the tissues out, Rosa went around collecting some more before she headed back to the table. She came in not even halfway through Jim declaring something, but it was enough to make her freeze. He sounded angry, but it wasn't his tone that got to Rosa. It was what he said.

"...people only enlist in Starfleet if they've got nothing better going on. They're all a bunch of assholes in matching uniforms."

It took Jim a solid minute to realize his mistake. He had been so focused on Captain Pike that he didn't even notice Rosa standing beside him. His eyes widened as he glanced at her. His mouth opened and closed like a fish out of water. Rosa didn't even look at him. She stood there, stiff as a board, fighting against the hurt his comment caused.

"Shit," Jim finally muttered, stumbling out of his seat. "Rose, please. I, I didn't—It's just—"

"No. I don't want to hear it," she said quietly. His anxiety was back, flooding her senses. "It's been a long night, and I have to be up early in the morning," Rosa added before turning to face Pike fully.

"Thank you, Captain Pike," she said, struggling to keep her voice even. "I'm sorry for tonight."

"It's fine, cadet," he said, his brows furrowed in concern. "I'll see you in the morning."

With a nod, the cadet turned to leave, only to stop again at the sound of Jim's voice.

"Rosa," he murmured. "Can't you—I haven't seen you in over a year, and—"

"That's not my fault, Jim," Rosa interrupted, facing him. "After we made up, we talked nearly every day. And then those started happening less and less, and—I don't know. I've tried reaching out these last few days, but you never answered. I'm happy I got to see you today, Jim, I am, but there were so many things I wanted to tell you but couldn't because you—" She trailed off with a defeated sigh, running a hand over her face. "I wanted my best friend to know that I needed him. Let him know that things are getting bad again, and I needed his help getting through that. Most of all, I wanted to know how you were doing, Jim. But it's too late now."

"I'm sorry," Jim said quietly. He looked at the ground, and his hands curled into tight fists. "I'm sorry, Rosie."

Rosa wrapped her arms around Jim's waist, pulling him into an embrace and resting her head against his chest. He wrapped his arms around her shoulders, holding her tightly against him. Jim buried his face in her curls, his anxiety shifting into shame. When they pulled back, Rosa placed the tissues in his hands and gently cupped his face, her thumbs stroking his cheeks.

"I know," she murmured. "You didn't mean it." Rosa lowered her hands. "It was nice seeing you, Jim. I'll call when I get the chance."

Without another word, Rosa left.

(Edited Last: December 26, 2023)

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Every little decision we ever make affects the outcome of our reality more than we know. This is one such instance.

Chapter Notes

Title: Searching the Stars

So I posted an incomplete chapter by accident and I'd like to apologize for that. This is my second attempt and hopefully it gets completed before I post it.

Also the second and third chapters have swapped places, so I'll fix that. I'm sorry for the mess that is this story, hopefully you guys can bear with me.

Other than that, I've got nothing new to add. How're you guys doing? Anything new going on in your life/lives? Have I told you, you look amazing today?

I don't own Star Trek, only my OCs.

Enjoy!

Rosa awoke with a groan. Her alarm clock was buzzing insistently as she reached over to slap the snooze button, squinting at the iridescent numbers—seven o'clock. Scowling and muttering, Rosa dragged herself out of bed and prepared to return to the Academy. As she grabbed her uniform and other necessities, Rosa couldn't help but remember what had unfolded after leaving the bar the night before.

As Uhura wished, the twenty-one-year-old called her to let her know everything was fine and in hopes of getting a ride.

"I said I'd come get you," Uhura said quietly. "I'll be there as soon as I can."

Rosa waited for nearly thirty minutes, but she didn't mind. It gave her a chance to think, to take in everything that happened. Closing her eyes, she took a deep breath before letting it out. The cold air filling her lungs was almost refreshing. Rosa thought about Jim and how happy she'd been to see and hug him. It almost felt like a dream. But the night quickly

devolved into such a mess, and Jim's comment was an ache that remained in Rosa's chest. She knew he didn't say it to hurt her, even if it did hurt. She just needed time, and once she got over it all, she'd contact him.

Captain Pike had exited the bar shortly after Rosa hung up her comm. He looked exhausted and tried to hide it when he noticed Rosa. She gave him an equally weary smile.

"He's lucky to have you as a friend," he remarked, standing beside her.

"I think Jim and I are lucky to have each other." She looked down with a slight frown. "We've known each other since we were little, sir. I can't imagine what my life would be like without him."

He nodded, considering the weight of her words. "I asked him to enlist," he said after a moment. He looked at her, taking in her reaction. "He's smart, and I know he has what it takes."

Rosa didn't say anything at first, looking back at the bar before looking at the captain. "If I'm being honest, sir," she said quietly, "I don't know if Jim will enlist. He has a... complicated relationship with Starfleet."

Captain Pike nodded, "I understand."

Rosa had an idea of where his mind went—the U.S.S. Kelvin. The destruction of the Starship was well-known within Starfleet. Hundreds of lives were saved except for one—Jim's father. His father's death impacted his life in more ways than one. When Rosa and Jim first met all those years ago, it took Jim a long time to open up about his family. When he finally told her, she nearly started crying. What made her cry was when he said meeting her was one of the best things that ever happened to him.

The twenty-one-year-old bit the inside of her cheek. Captain Pike only knew part of why Jim held such hard feelings toward Starfleet. What happened during Jim's and Rosa's childhood was complicated and personal. So, the cadet didn't say anything else on the matter. She and Captain Pike stayed outside the bar until Uhura showed up, wherein she said her final goodbyes to the captain for the night, and he nodded in response.

"Hey, Rose," Uhura said to her friend as they met outside the shuttle.

"Hey." Rosa gave a small, tired smile.

"How're you feeling?"

"I'm tired but fine," she responded. "Thanks for getting me last night. I appreciate it."

Uhura shrugged. "It's no big deal," she said. "I know you would've done the same for me."

The cadet nodded. "How're you doing?"

"I'm okay. Ready to go."

"God, me too," she groaned. "I'm ready to get this over with."

A brief silence fell over the pair, filled only with the sounds of other cadets talking and any final checks being done on the shuttle.

"Rosa, about last night," Uhura started, "with Jim—"

"It's fine," Rosa interrupted, giving a dismissive wave. "He's always been like that. And I know you can handle guys like him, so..."

"No, don't try and play it off. I saw you leave, and it made sense when he told me his name. It's not fair to you."

"That's just how he is," she remarked. "He'd always get in fights over flirting with the wrong woman." The cadet shrugged. "Before I enlisted in Starfleet, I tried getting him to stop, but he never listened. I can only hope he stops before someone takes it too far one day."

"I still think it's unfair to you," Uhura observed. "You're a good friend, but you shouldn't have to deal with that constantly."

Rosa gave another shrug. "Were you waiting for anyone?" she asked, changing the subject.

"No," Uhura said. "Did you want to head in?" She motioned toward the shuttle, and Rosa nodded.

"Good morning, cadets," Captain Pike said as they boarded.

"Good morning, Captain," they responded.

The captain gave Rosa a knowing nod, and she gave one in return. While she admired his attempt to recruit Jim, she wouldn't be surprised if he didn't attend. She was willing to give the benefit of the doubt, though.

"You okay?" Uhura asked as they sat down, seeing the distracted look on her friend's face.

"Yeah, I'm fine," the cadet offered as she buckled in.

After buckling herself in, Uhura grabbed Rosa's hand, giving it a comforting squeeze. Rosa squeezed her friend's hand in response before letting go. Uhura started talking again, mentioning her classes and how excited she was when something caught Rosa's attention. Or someone, rather. Jim, still wearing the same outfit from the night before. He looked lost and confused but tried not to let it show.

Drowning out the noise around her, Rosa focused on reaching Jim's mind, hoping to get his attention. '*Jim,*' she called out. He paused in front of three empty seats, surprise washing across his features before noticing Rosa. His eyes lit up when he saw her, and an equally bright smile graced his features.

Jim motioned Rosa to come over, pointing to the empty seats he was in front of. She saw his expression become almost pleading when she hesitated, glancing at Uhura before returning to

him.

"Go." Rosa jumped a little, her concentration breaking as she quickly turned her head toward Uhura.

"What?" she stammered.

Uhura nodded in Jim's direction. "Go," she repeated. "Besides, I can't handle you two giving each other those sad puppy eyes the whole ride."

"We were talking," Rosa muttered, getting herself out of her seat. "Trying to, at least."

"Right, of course." There was a teasing glint in Uhura's eyes.

The cadet gave her friend a playful nudge as she made her way over to Jim. He smiled as she sat beside him, visibly relaxing in his seat.

"Thank you," he murmured.

Once Rosa was comfortable, she turned toward Jim and punched him on the shoulder.

"Ow," he exclaimed. "I—What was that for?"

"For being an idiot last night," Rosa scolded.

Jim's face fell. "I'm sorry," he said quietly.

"Hey." Rosa reached over and grabbed his hand, lacing her fingers through his. He looked at her, worry and anxiety in his eyes. "I'm not mad at you," she said softly. "I'm scared for you. All these fights? One day, you'll run into the wrong person and—" She squeezed his hand. "I don't want anything happening to you."

He squeezed her hand before giving her knuckles a soft kiss.

"I'll be on my best behavior," he mumbled, kissing her knuckles. "I promise."

Rosa chuckled at that. "Best behavior, my ass," she said. Jim smiled as he let go of her hand.

Strapping in, Jim looked over where Rosa had previously been sitting, recognizing the woman she was next to from the night before. "Is she your friend?" Jim asked, nodding in Uhura's direction.

"She is," Rosa said, giving him a dry look as she strapped in. "And she's off limits."

"You know, I never got your first name," he called out, getting Uhura's attention. She smiled when Rosa hit his arm. "Okay, okay, I'm kidding," he laughed, holding his hands up in surrender.

"You're ridiculous," Rosa chuckled.

When their laughter died down, they noticed a man all but stomping over and sitting beside Jim, not dressed in a Starfleet uniform but in civilian attire. He looked disheveled, as if he'd just rolled out of bed and threw together whatever he had available.

Once he'd strapped in, he turned to Jim with a scowl. "I may throw up on you," he stated.

"I think these things are safe," Jim replied, instinctively grabbing Rosa's hand.

"Don't patronize me, kid," the other man remarked almost bitterly. "One tiny crack in the hull, and our blood boils in thirteen seconds. Solar flare might crop up and cook us in our seats. And wait 'till you're sitting pretty with a case of Andorian shingles. See if you're still so relaxed when your eyeballs are bleeding." He reached into his jacket's pocket and took out a flask before adding, "Space is disease and danger wrapped in darkness and silence."

Rosa's brows furrowed. "You know Starfleet operates in space," she said carefully.

Opening his flask, the pair saw his scowl drop slightly before returning. "Got nowhere else to go," he muttered. "The ex-wife took the whole damn planet in the divorce. All I got left is my bones."

He took a sip from the flask before offering it to Jim and Rosa. Jim took it first, nodding at the man as he sipped.

"Jim Kirk," he said before handing it to Rosa.

"Rosa Delgado." She took a sip before handing it back.

"McCoy, Leonard McCoy."

(Edited Last: December 26, 2023)

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Every little decision we ever make affects the outcome of our reality more than we know. This is one such instance.

Chapter Notes

Title: Searching the Stars

I'm writing this chapter instead of my finals!

Is this just pure, unadulterated filler told from Jim's perspective? Yes, yes it is. Is it at least a *good*, well written filler? I'll leave that up to you guys. The next few chapters are probably going to be filler, just to add some substance, I guess. I don't know. Any feedback you lovely people may have on this story is always welcome. I'd love to know what I'm doing right and how I can improve the story/my writing. Thank you!

I don't own Star Trek, only my OCs.

Enjoy!

The fall term at the Academy was only a few weeks in, and Jim was already starting to feel the pressure. He was being challenged and pushed in ways he'd never expected. Walking out of his last class and making his way to the courtyard, Jim wondered if he could do better as Pike had claimed. Kirk had proposed he'd graduate earlier, so he took on twice as many courses and worked himself to the bone. That didn't stop his anxieties from starting to weigh on him, making him second guess everything. But Pike's words rang in his head, and he felt that burning desire return, to go above and beyond what Pike expected.

'If you're half the man your father was, Jim, Starfleet could use a man like you.'

'Show Cadet Lopez you're ready to change.'

'Your father was captain of a Starship for twelve minutes. I dare you to do better.'

Growing up, Kirk always did well in school, keeping good grades despite his reckless behavior. Back then, he'd been bullied and made to feel ashamed of how well he did academically. That partially played into his behavioral issues. But Jim also had Rosa to

comfort him, to bring him back. His best friend, who always knew how to make him feel better. His heart skipped with every smile; his skin left tingling with every touch of her hands. Those feelings still haven't changed. They only intensified over the years.

Setting his jaw, Jim tried to push those thoughts out of his mind. He didn't want to risk *years* of friendship over whatever he was feeling. And God, he was feeling something. It was something more than friendship, and Jim only realized it in the last couple of months. That's why he didn't call her as often before the bar. Hearing her voice made Jim's heart flutter, and it unsettled him.

"Jim!"

Speak of the devil. Snapping out of his thoughts, Jim looked around until he noticed Rosa's figure approaching him. God, she was smiling. He plastered a smile on his face as she approached him. His pulse quickened as anxiety bubbled in the pit of his stomach. "Hey, Rosie," he said, hugging her once she reached him. It was instinctual, the need to touch her. To be close to her.

She melted into the embrace, her head resting on his chest as her arms wrapped around his middle. "Haven't seen you in a bit," she murmured, pulling back to look at him. "How're you adjusting?"

Jim pulled her closer and buried his face in her hair, letting out a dramatic groan. Rosa chuckled, bringing a hand up to cup the back of his neck. "This was not what I was expecting," he mumbled.

"And what were you expecting?" she remarked playfully. Jim shrugged. "You need any help studying?" He shook his head. "Are you sure? I don't mind," she added, her smile and playfulness disappearing.

Pulling back, Jim gave her a small smile. Her dark eyes, framed by the wild bangs of her thick, curly hair, looked at him expectantly. "I'm sure," he assured her, gently grabbing her hands, his thumbs brushing over her knuckles. "It's nothing I can't handle, I promise. And if I do need any help, I'll come to you."

Rosa chewed on her bottom lip before responding. "You're taking a lot of classes this term, Jim," she said carefully. "You'll be stretching yourself thin. Are you sure this is what you want?"

"I have to," he said, nodding. "To prove I've got what it takes."

Rosa studied him for a moment before nodding. "Okay," she said. "Sorry for bombarding you. I just wanted to check in."

Jim smiled, giving her hands a gentle squeeze before dropping his hands. "It's okay. I appreciate it, thank you."

Her smile returned. "Wanna grab something to eat?" she offered.

"You done with your classes for today?" Jim asked.

"Just about. I've got a bunch of homework to get through, but I want to eat before I start on anything."

"I'm always down to eat," he responded. "Relax a little before I do my assignments, too."

Linking her arm between Jim's, Rosa tugged him in the direction of the dining hall. "Let's go," she exclaimed.

"What about Bones?" Jim asked, chuckling at her actions. "You're not going to ask him if he wants to eat with us?"

"I ran into him before I came here. He said he wanted to call Joanna and focus on his studies afterward," she said with a slight pout. "And you know how Lee gets. Maybe he'll have some free time tomorrow to spend with us."

"Maybe." Jim paused for a moment. "Or we can just go to my room and bug him into eating with us."

"Jim," Rosa snickered. "Leave the poor guy alone."

Laughing, Jim conceded. "Okay," he said. "I'll bother him some other time."

"How kind of you," Rosa teased.

Jim smiled. Her giggle sent something warm through him. Her hand slid down his arm and found his hand, their fingers lacing together. Something so simple that made him feel grounded and comforted. Feelings he never wanted to go away.

Fuck.

(Edited Last: June 05, 2022)

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Every little decision we ever make affects the outcome of our reality more than we know. This is one such instance.

Chapter Notes

Title: Searching the Stars

Sorry if this chapter is messy.

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Enjoy!

By the time mid-November rolled around, Jim and Rosa had a routine. Meet after class to grab a bite to eat, then go to the library and study. Jim even convinced Bones to join them on occasion. Despite every eye roll and snarky comment, Rosa could tell Bones enjoyed the company. It was nice, simple even. It felt almost normal.

"Is Jim not coming?" Rosa asked. She noticed Bones waiting outside her last class, looking over his PADD with furrowed brows, but not Kirk. Something that seemed to be happening more often as of late.

A hint of a scowl came across Bones' face at the question. "I doubt it," he remarked. "He's... *preoccupied* at the moment."

"Oh," was all Rosa said. *Preoccupied*. Of course. That was bound to happen sooner or later. The cadet just had to ignore it and move on. That's what she did for every one of his sexual encounters in the past.

"Of course, he had to use *our* dorm for his little escapade," Bones grumbled as they headed out. "Kid can't keep it in his damn pants half the time, I swear."

Rosa let out an almost humorless chuckle, "Trust me, I know."

Looking at the twenty-one-year-old for a moment, Bones could see the hurt on her face. She tried her hardest to hide it, and he felt guilty for bringing it up. "Sorry," he stated.

"It's not a big deal; no reason to apologize."

"It is for you."

Rosa shook her head. "Len, it's nothing. Jim's just being Jim."

Gently grabbing Rosa's upper arm, Bones led her to the side of the walkway. She looked at him confusedly. "It's a big deal to you, Rosa," he repeated quietly, giving her a knowing look. "We both know how Jim can be, you especially. And given how you feel—"

"He's my friend," she interrupted. "And I don't want to—"

"I'm not stupid, and I'm certainly not blind," Bones said. "You and Jim are close, and I understand that. But I can see how you look at each other. And I'm Jim's damn roommate; he's talked about you more times than I can keep track of."

"What has he said?" Rosa's cheeks started warming as she shifted under her friend's gaze.

Bones' expression softened as he let go of her arm. "How much he cares for you," he started. "How you mean the world to him. He's briefly talked about how you met and, most of all—how he loves you."

Rosa's face felt as if it were on fire. Her heart was hammering in her chest, and her brain felt like it was malfunctioning. Jim mentioned being in love with her?

"He probably meant he loves me as a *friend*," Rosa stammered as doubt began to wash over her.

"Rose—"

"I just—I can't *picture* him feeling that way about me, you know?" she said. She wanted to believe that it was impossible, but there was a part of her that took a second to think over Bones' words before asking, "How do you know if you might love someone or are in love with the idea of loving someone?"

There was silence as Bones thought it over. "Jocelyn and I," he started, "we weren't friends first before we started dating, so you're in a different ballpark than me. We met, there was a connection, and it took off from there. The whole relationship moved...*fast*. That's probably why it didn't work out in the end. But you and Jim? You've got something different."

"I know there's something there for him. Some days I wonder if it's real or if I'm trying to convince myself it is. But I'm trying not to push it further than a friendship. And that's the problem—I'm confusing myself. To me, Jim is perfect. I just don't want to get my hopes up and then find out he doesn't feel the same way."

"How does his voice make you feel?" Bones asked. Rosa paused confusion washing over her at the abruptness of the question. "Bear with me. One word, how's his voice make you feel?"

"Safe."

"How would you feel if you never saw him again?"

Rosa shook her head, tears threatening to flood her eyes. "Horrible," she replied, trying to control herself.

"Can you live without him in your life?"

"No." Her hands were running up and down the sides of her legs, trying to calm her emotions and racing heart. "*God*, no."

Bones sighed. "Rosa, this is something you have to figure out for yourself," he remarked. "Take it from someone who's been married. Love isn't always a fairytale. It isn't always racing hearts and butterflies. Sometimes it's your best friend."

"I don't know," Rosa muttered. "I just—" She shook her head again, frustration coming over her.

"Why do you think he doesn't love you?"

"We both had rough childhoods. I'd take care of him and try to help when things got tough. When I was seventeen, I started to feel something for him. There were no butterflies or shock or anything. I tried chalking it up as I imagined it, but it never went away."

"I don't understand."

"I'm not a strong person," Rosa admitted. "Jim can be reckless and impulsive, but he knows to act when things aren't right. He challenges people, and once he gets his mind set on something, that's it. I'm not—I let myself get overwhelmed and *freeze*."

Bones shook his head. "Now I know that's not true," he said softly. "*You* know it's not. And Jim sure as hell knows that's not true."

Rosa scoffed.

"You know what I think?" he asked.

"What?"

"When those feelings appeared, you were seeing Jim for the first time."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"You've seen Jim for all he is. The good and the bad. You let yourself see him because a part of you knew he'd been there the whole time. Maybe you realize it's safe to love him. Is it romantic? Deep down, I think you know." Rosa opened her mouth, but Bones held his hand up, giving her a stern look. "Telling him how you feel is the scary part. But that's *only* if you tell him. And then you'll find out how he feels and get your answer."

Rosa let out a shaky breath and rubbed her eyes.

"Don't worry," Bones concluded. "You'll figure it out sooner or later. What you do next is up to you. Do you want to take a risk and tell him or decide to keep it to yourself?"

(Edited Last: June 12, 2022)

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Every little decision we ever make affects the outcome of our reality more than we know. This is one such instance.

Chapter Notes

Title: Searching the Stars

I'd like to apologize for the hiatus. I let life and a new story distract me, and I hope you all will forgive me.

Sorry if this chapter isn't the best, but I promise I will come back to do some editing. And let me know what you guys think! I can't improve this story + my writing if you don't tell me what needs fixing.

I don't own Star Trek, only my OCs.

Enjoy!

"No, Jim." Rosa threw a look her friend's way, watching as he gave her an exaggerated pout in response. The two were in Jim's and Bones' room. Bones had left hours ago, muttering something about needing quiet and throwing a subtle look Rosa's way. She tried to hide the way her cheeks warmed. It was supposed to be a rare day off studying, but Jim had other plans. Much to Rosa's—*slight*—frustration.

"Why not?" he whined. Jim rested his head on Rosa's shoulder, nuzzling his nose at the junction where her neck and shoulder met. "Just let me *do this for you*."

"No," she pressed, her cheeks flushing.

"It's your *birthday*; let's do something fun."

Rosa gently nudged Jim off her shoulder and gave him another look—more defeated than before. "I don't want to do anything, Jim," she said. "I'm serious. I appreciate what you're trying to do, but I don't want a party or anything. I want this to be like any other day."

November 30th was a weird day, in Rosa's opinion. She knew it was her birthday, but it never felt like her birthday. Or rather, she stopped associating the end of the month with her

birthday to protect herself—a way to separate herself from when she was younger. The only person, besides Jim, who acknowledged Rosa's birthday was her aunt Alana. Her mother's sister.

Jim's expression softened as he nodded. He watched as Rosa let out a soft sigh and rested her head on his shoulder. "Have you called Lani?" he asked, resting his head atop hers. Jim was well acquainted with Rosa's aunt. She was a woman he respected and admired.

"She called this morning." Rosa couldn't help but smile. Alana was the closest thing the cadet had to a mother. When no one else was willing to take her in after the hospital, the older woman stepped in and stepped up. "She says hi and wants to know when you'll call her," Rosa stated. "She said she wants to know how her favorite nephew's doing."

Jim snorted, lifting his head with a smirk. "I'll have to give her a call one of these days," he snickered. "Can't keep her waiting too long, right?" Jim stood up with a huff, stretching his back as he heaved a heavy sigh. "She's still calling me her nephew," he chuckled. "She's too much sometimes."

"You practically lived at her apartment," Rosa reminded him, standing up. "She had a room just for you, but you always came to mine."

"Of course I did." Jim looked at her, instinctively grabbing her hands. She felt just how serious he was, making her chest tighten. "It was always you and me," he said softly. "Even back then."

"Not always." Rosa gave his hands a gentle squeeze. "We did have each other, but the others were there, too."

Jim nodded, giving her hands a gentle squeeze in response before dropping them. "I was thinking," he started, looking away, "maybe we can grab a quick bite to eat. Maybe look out at the water." He looked back at Rosa, gauging her reaction.

The cadet smiled. "I'd like that."

Rosa watched as the sky changed, but she often found her mind wandering, thinking about the man next to her. Jim was sitting close enough that Rosa could feel his body heat. He hadn't said much since they left his room, aside from the occasional "happy birthday" and commenting on how nice of a night it was. But there was something else. Something was swirling in his relaxed, nonchalance. A feeling close to contentment made a warmth wash over Rosa. Content in being so close, but a sense of longing just beneath the surface. She was reminded of her talk with Bones, and a twinge of anxiety shot through her.

"You know," Rosa started, nudging Jim's shoulder, "before you enrolled in the Academy, I thought you were mad at me."

"What?" Jim turned to look at her, brows furrowed in confusion. "Why would I be mad at you?"

"You weren't talking to me. I'd tried calling, but you weren't answering, so I thought I said something that upset you." Rosa looked over at him. "I was scared. I thought I had lost my best friend."

Jim shook his head. "It's not your fault I wasn't talking to you," he sighed. "That was on me."

"I know." Rosa looked down. She felt his confusion wash over her. "At the bar, I felt something was off with you. I wanted to ask, but you got—" She rubbed her hands over her pants and sighed heavily. "I don't know," she murmured and looked away.

"Hey, it's alright." Jim reached over and grabbed one of her hands. "You can tell me."

Looking back at him, Rosa pursed her lips. She kept thinking about what Bones said. Rosa would figure it out, but was she willing to risk her friendship? Should she admit her feelings or keep them to herself? Rosa knew the logical choice would be to say something and get it out in the open. But she couldn't find the courage to do so. Her mind rationalized that admitting to anything other than friendship would ruin years of friendship. Rosa would lose someone who meant the world to her, and she wasn't ready to face that.

"I just want us to be able to talk to each other," she said. The words came out of her mouth before she could stop herself. Inwardly, the cadet was cringing. How could she say something like that and still have trouble admitting her feelings? "But when we're ready," she added. "Whatever bothered you then, I won't force you to tell me now. But I'm always here when or if you need me."

Jim nodded. "Thank you," he sighed. "And the same goes for you, Rosie. I know there are things you're dealing with. I don't want you feeling rushed or anything. Tell me when you're ready to."

Rosa tried for a smile and nodded. Looking over at the water, she felt herself relax a little. The cadet knew part of her would continue to struggle with telling Jim, but she wasn't going to rush herself. She could only hope that it wouldn't be too late if that day ever came.

(Edited Last: August 25, 2022)

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Every little decision we ever make affects the outcome of our reality more than we know. This is one such instance.

Chapter Notes

Title: Searching the Stars

Hello, my lovelies. It's been a minute, hasn't it? I hope you're all doing well. I'd like to apologize for the hiatus, but I've been busy between school, my failing mental health, and finding a rental property that isn't total garbage. On a lighter note, I would like to thank everyone who's supported this story thus far. I really appreciate it! I love every single one of you, and I wish the best for all of you.

Disclaimer: I do not own Star Trek (the movies, shows, etc.) or any of the characters; I only own my OCs.

Enjoy!

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

Jim ran a hand over his face for the millionth time. Tears collected in his eyes, hanging dangerously close to the edges of his lashes. Kirk's comm. hung loosely in one hand as his mother's voice raced through his head. Her sobs echoed through his mind, her words laced with venom and remorse. How could she be so remorseful while insulting her son? His chest constricted with the emotions that swirled within him.

God, he couldn't even have an hour in the morning before she called. He felt bad enough knowing what day it was, but she had to make it worse.

A sudden wetness hit Jim's hand, making him flinch. His tears had begun to fall, and he hadn't noticed.

Fuck, he thought. He quickly wiped his eyes, throwing his comm. onto his bed. "Fuck," he muttered.

The bathroom door opened, but it didn't process in Jim's mind until he heard— "Everything okay?" Bones' voice was a welcome distraction. The concern Jim heard made his chest constrict again.

"Fine—everything's fine." It didn't sound convincing, but Jim didn't care. There was a long pause before Bones said anything. Kirk turned his head slightly, trying to hide the tears.

"Look, uh—you know you can tell me anything, right?" There was hesitance, almost like Bones was walking on eggshells.

Jim nodded. "Thanks, Bones," he sighed, "but I-I think I need a minute."

Another pause.

"Should I get Rose?"

Jim hesitated. If she found out he'd answered a call from his mom— He nodded. While he knew Rosie would be pissed, Jim needed her. She always knew what to do.

Bones shuffled out of the room. The silence sounded deafening.

Jim let out a heavy sigh as he ran his hand over his face again.

Rosa chewed on the inside of her cheek as she listened to Bones. She was fidgeting with the hem of her uniform. They stood before Bones' and Jim's dorm, and Rosa could feel Jim's emotions inside. The overwhelming guilt and sadness. The feeling of being a failure.

"I've never seen him like this before," Bones stated. His worry came off him in waves, flooding Rosa's senses. "He's all— I heard his comm. go off while I was getting ready. Whoever he talked to did a number on him; I know that much."

Rosa's heart ached, her chest constricting. "You know what today is, right?" she asked, her voice soft. Bones' brows furrowed as he thought it over. His expression fell as it dawned on him.

"His birthday," he murmured.

"That was more than likely his mom." Rosa clasped her hands together, nails digging into her skin. "She does this every year; she calls him up just to tear him down." Anger flared in the cadet, spreading like fire throughout her. "I don't like the idea of him answering," she added, "but it's his mom, you know?"

Bones nodded, understanding washing over him. "God," he sighed. "I can't imagine..."

Rosa shook her head. "I'm gonna head on in," she said. "Thanks for getting me."

"Don't worry about it." He tried for a smile. "Call me if you need anything."

Nodding, Rosa watched as her friend left before turning to the closed door in front of her. Taking a deep breath, she let it out before knocking on the door. There was a long silence, heavy. "Jim?" Rosa kept her tone soft. "Can I come in?"

There was another moment of silence before the door opened. Jim looked disheveled, exhausted. His eyes were bloodshot, and his expression softened when he saw Rosa. He stepped aside, allowing her in. When the door closed, the cadet turned and hugged him, her arms wrapped tightly around his waist as his arms circled her shoulders, bringing her closer.

Rosa rested her head against Jim's chest, giving a soft "I'm sorry."

Jim shook his. "Don't be. I shouldn't have answered."

Pulling back, the cadet rested her hands on his shoulders. His hands went to her hips. "She's your mother," she stated. "I don't blame you for wanting to talk to her."

"But it's the same thing every year." Jim's shoulders slumped, his eyes glancing down. "I know it's coming, but I can't stop myself."

Squeezing his shoulders, Rosa tried for a comforting smile. "If you want, we can have an 'us' day," she offered. "Skip classes, spend the day doing whatever. I even have a surprise for you later."

"I don't know." Uncertain eyes met the cadet's dark ones.

Softly, "It's whatever you want to do. Either way, I'm here for you, okay?"

Jim chewed on the inside of his cheek. His birthday was always a difficult day for him; his mother never made it any better, either. Classes seemed a good distraction, but his mind reeled from what happened. And Rosa was right there, looking at him with those dark eyes and an expression so gentle it made his heart ache. She always knew what to do when these things happened, always knew what to say. Jim couldn't help but wonder what he did to deserve a friend like her. Her gaze faltered briefly, and a sting went through Jim's chest. He lowered his gaze.

"You don't have to skip classes for me," he murmured. "I don't want you getting in trouble."

"Don't worry." Her voice sounded strained, or was he imagining it? "I won't get in trouble."

Jim looked at her, uncertainty still swirling in him, before he gave a small smile. "Okay, fine," he started. "You know I can never say 'no' to you."

Rosa smiled, but it didn't quite reach her eyes. "One day you will," she joked.

By the end of the day, Jim and Rosa had found a reasonably secluded spot on campus. The setting sky was colored with purples, oranges, and pinks. The two sat together, close enough to feel each other's body heat. A soft smile was on Jim's face, his eyes clearer, and a weight seemingly lifted from his shoulders, though it still lingered in the back of his mind.

"Thank you, Rosie," he said, "for everything."

Rosa playfully waved his thanks off. "Don't worry about it," she remarked.

"Rosa," the seriousness in Jim's voice didn't go unnoticed, "I don't mean for today. You've always been there for me; even when we had that quiet spell, you were there. The voice in my head, a prickle on the back of my neck—it was you. Always you. You are one of the strongest, most important people in my life. And there's nothing I can do to repay you for it."

The cadet felt tears sting her eyes, a hand moving to cover Jim's, fingers lacing together. "You're all of that and more," she squeezed his hand with a soft smile. Jim pressed a kiss to her hairline, taking a second to close his eyes and savor it before pulling back.

"You know," Jim started, a hint of teasing in his voice, "I distinctly remember you saying you have a surprise for me."

Rosa chuckled, "Of course." She gave him a playful look. "Close your eyes; no cheating." She watched him close his eyes before rummaging in the pouch on her hip. "Okay, open," she murmured.

Jim's eyes opened, and he was met with a pocket watch. The watch itself dangled from the chain in Rosa's hand. It was old-fashioned, obviously a family heirloom or something close to one. Familiarity bubbled in Jim the longer he looked at it.

"Is that...?" His voice wavered.

"Andy's watch," Rosa confirmed.

"I-I can't take this, Rosie." Jim shook his head frantically. "This was your stepdad's."

"Yeah, was ." Rosa gave a strained smile, taking Jim's hand and dropping the pocket watch in his palm, closing his fingers around it. "I want you to have it. I already talked to Lani this morning, and she approved, so..." She cleared her throat. "...you might as well take it."

Jim glanced at the watch again before looking at Rosa. An array of emotions danced on his face. "Thank you," he whispered.

Rosa nodded tearfully. "He would've wanted you to have it."

Jim wrapped her in a tight embrace. What did he do to deserve her?

(Edited Last: December 26, 2023)

This story is entirely unbeta'd. Please let me know if you see any spelling errors or general things that need to be clarified!

Soon-to-Be Chapter

Chapter Summary

Will become a Chapter in the near future.

This will become a chapter in the near future. If you guys see any spelling/grammatical errors or any inconsistencies within the previous chapters, please let me know and I will fix it as soon as I can.

Thank you.

Author's Note

Chapter Summary

Not a chapter

Okay, my lovelies, I'm back! Sorry for the extended hiatus. Just a few things to mention:

I did rewrite CHAPTER 7. If you guys are interested in reading/re-reading it, I'd appreciate it! But it is entirely up to you guys.

I will be turning this and the prior author's note into chapters in the near future. I don't have specific dates yet, but it will be happening!

Lastly, thank you guys so, so, *so* much for your patience. I appreciate and love you all and I hope you're all still invested in this story. If not, that's okay. I still appreciate you nonetheless.

Until next time!

Not a Chapter

Chapter Summary

Every little decision we ever make affects the outcome of our reality more than we know. This is one such instance.

Chapter Notes

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

Author's Note:

Heyyyy! I'm sorry for the hiatus, but I do have some news regarding this story. I have been going through the chapters doing some grammatical edits, but I feel like I should do more than that. Looking over what I've written so far, I started thinking, maybe I could do some rewrites. But I want to know what you guys think. Do you guys have any suggestions or ideas?

Thank you! And I'm sorry for the long pause in the story.

Chapter End Notes

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