

Another Soul Lost

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Summary

A young ensign goes into complete cardiac failure after contact with a mysterious alien plant, and there's nothing Doctor McCoy can do.

Notes

FebuWhump Day 8

Prompt: "Why won't it stop?"

"Clear," Doctor McCoy said loudly, pausing for just long enough to make sure everyone had actually gotten clear before pressing the paddles down onto the patient's chest. The unconscious man on the table— some poor security ensign, just a kid, really —arched his back involuntarily under the electric pulse that jolted through him, before falling limply back to the table, head lolling to the side.

"He's still in fibrillation," Nurse Chapel reported, just as McCoy looked up to check the kid's vitals, seeing that he hadn't regained a pulse.

"Let's try this again," McCoy said, managing to sound calm, but in truth, he had a very bad feeling about this. "Clear!"

Another shock briefly animated the body on the table, and McCoy pushed away comparisons to Frankenstein's monster to check vitals again. Still nothing. The kid's heart-rate was still flat lining, the imaging of his heart showing the erratic quivering of ventricular fibrillation.

"Again," McCoy ordered, and the two nurses assisting lifted their hands before he even gave the order to clear.

This once again failed to restore a normal rhythm to the kid's heart. McCoy gritted his teeth. They were running out of time. "Chapel, administer two milligrams of epinephrine," he ordered, feeling like he was grasping at straws.

Nurse Chapel looked at him skeptically. "Doctor, we've already missed our window, using it now could do more harm than good," she said quickly.

Normally McCoy would feel pride in his nurses for speaking up when they disagreed with him, but now was not the time. "Epinephrine," he demanded. "Now. We're running out of options."

Chapel frowned at him, clearly in disagreement, but prepared the hypo anyways, and in record time. She handed it to Doctor McCoy, despite having been told to administer it herself. Her hard gaze said everything: *I disagree with this, so you can so it yourself.*

McCoy took the hypo from her, and hesitated briefly. Nurse Chapel was right. This could do more harm than good. But defibrillation wasn't working, and they were running out of options and time. He had to take the risk. He plunged the hypo down hard into the kid's chest, into his heart, and readied the defibrillator again.

"Clear." Another jolt. Still no pulse. Heart still fibrillating. "Dammit," McCoy snapped. "Why won't it stop?"

He readied the paddles again, the nurses jumping back as he neglected to warn them before sending electricity jolting through the kid's body. Still no pulse. Teeth clenched, he tried again. And again. And again. And again—

"Doctor," Nurse Chapel put a gentle hand on his arm, looking at him with both concern and resignation.

Breathing heavily, McCoy looked at the clock. They were long past the point where brain-death would have occurred. He checked the image

of the kid's heart, and saw that it had finally fallen still. *Damn*. He had wanted it to stop, but not like this. Then, he looked down at the patient, pale and clammy and lifeless on the table. He was only twenty-two.

"Time of death," McCoy said, dejectedly. "Seventeen thirty-two. Cause, complete cardiac failure following injection of unknown alien flora." *Damn alien plants, always out to kill his crew. Fuck those stupid plants.*

Nurse Chapel finished typing out the death certificate, and Nurse Embry pulled a sheet over the dead man's face.

Confident that his nurses would see his transfer to the morgue through, McCoy stepped into his office, letting the door close behind him. He sat down at his desk and let his forehead thump against the cool metal surface. It was always hard losing a patient. But it was the hardest when they were this young.

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