

Not Allowed to Die

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Summary

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Notes

FebuWhump Day 29
Prompt: Not Allowed to Die

Jim Kirk wasn't allowed to die. But by god did he try.

It all started when he really *did* die. He really should have stayed dead, but his friends had found a way to make a miracle happen. And a miracle it was— for them, at least. For Jim, it was a bit more complicated than that.

He hadn't been the same after his resurrection. At first, he thought it was a combination of survivor's guilt and coming to terms with his own mortality. But as the weeks went on, he realized that that wasn't it. But what it *was*, he couldn't quite say. It was like a piece of him was missing.

He had an emptiness within him that was so deep, that he felt as if he were a walking corpse. Sometimes, late at night when he couldn't sleep, he would stare at the ceiling and wonder if the resurrection had even really worked. The super-blood had repaired and reanimated his body, but what had happened to his soul?

Is that what was missing? His very soul?

Souls weren't real. But there was no other way for him to describe it. It was like the entire essence of his self was gone. He felt empty, and cold, and depressed. Medically, he was alive, but he was dead inside.

He had always been a bit reckless, but he became more-so after he recovered enough to return to active duty. He assigned himself to every away mission, especially if they seemed like the might be dangerous. And while he was on said missions, he didn't take as much care to ensure his own personal safety as he used to. There was a definite uptick in the frequency that he was admitted to sickbay. Attacked by animals that he wandered too close to, allergic reactions to unknown plants that he shouldn't have touched, shocked by malfunctioning electrical equipment. It seemed that if there was a hazard, he was prone to falling right into it.

But his recklessness turned to a strange clumsiness after a while. Because after all, it wasn't enough just to get hurt. On one away mission, he fell off high cliff. Well, "fell" was the story he told his friends after they recovered his dying body and managed to put Humpty back together again.

Another time, while he was ill, he gave himself a few too many sleep hypos in his delirium. "Delirium" was what he told his friends after Bones purged his system before it could stop his heart. But Jim knew what he was doing.

He encountered things that he was allergic to with an increased frequency. He "accidentally" ate or drank things that contained ingredients that he was deathly allergic to. But there was always someone nearby with an emergency hypo to save him from death by anaphylaxis.

When he tried the sleep aids again, Bones caught on.

"Why do you want to die so badly?" Bones asked him. "Wasn't dying the first time bad enough?"

Jim lay on the couch in Bones' office, staring despondently at the ceiling. "Something got left behind when I died, Bones. Something I can't live without."

"What's that?"

Jim shrugged. "I don't know. Something is just missing. I feel empty. I feel like I'm dead on the inside."

Bones patted him on the shoulder sympathetically. "It sounds like you're depressed, Jim," he said. "Really depressed. I'll get you something for that. You'll start feeling better in a few weeks."

At first Jim was hopeful. Maybe he was feeling the way he did because he *was* depressed. Maybe he didn't have to die to stop feeling the way he felt. But the weeks and months passed, trialling different drugs, and none of them made the slightest difference.

It wasn't that he wasn't depressed. It was that part of him was still dead. And he wouldn't be at peace until the living part and the dead part were reconciled. They couldn't bring back what he had lost. So his only option was to join that lost piece of him.

Bones kept him in sickbay under twenty-four hour observation after he nearly succeeded in one of his attempts. Sometimes one of the on-duty nurses would be assigned to watch him, but often times his friends would take turns sitting with him, and trying to make him feel better. He was glad for their efforts, but felt bad that there was nothing they could do to help. He knew that his condition saddened them.

"Bones," Jim said one day.

"Yeah, kid?"

"Just let me die. Please."

There was a long pause. Bones studied Jim's face, but it was blank. His eyes were dull and empty. Bones sighed. "I can't do that, Jim," he said. "Just hang tight. I'm doing everything I can to find a way to fix you, alright?"

"I'm suffering, Bones," Jim pleaded. "I don't want to hurt anymore. Just let me go. Don't make me suffer this anymore."

"Jim," Bones said, "I can't—"

"Can't, or won't?"

Bones' mouth formed a thin line. It wasn't that he couldn't. Helping someone end their life was something he could do, and had done before. But he really didn't want to do it now. Not with Jim.

"Won't," Bones answered after a long pause. "Jim, I can't let you die. I can't. As your friend, I can't do it."

"The do it as my doctor," Jim said impatiently.

"You say that like I can separate myself like that."

"Then find me another doctor to do it."

"No."

Jim looked at Bones with his dull, pained eyes. "Bones, please. Just look at me."

Bones did look at him. Jim looked like a corpse. But Bones shook his head. "Dammit, Jim. You're not allowed to die. Not from this. I can fix this. Just give me time."

"Not allowed to die?" Jim scoffed.

"Yeah," Bones said. "Mark my words, Jim. I will drag your screaming soul back to the land of the living as many times as I need to. So just give it a rest and let me work on getting you better."

Jim gave up, and turned onto his side, facing away from Bones. He was done with this conversation. He was tired. He wanted to sleep, but the only kind of sleep that would give him rest was the kind he wouldn't wake up from. But Jim Kirk wasn't allowed to die. And so his pain continued.

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