

Wait

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by [SLWalker](#)

Summary

(2232) - Spock, McCoy and Scott cross paths as children.

The port was rather chilly; the temperature kept to a more galactic standard, which tended to be cooler than what was comfortable for most humans. On the other hand, it would probably be even more uncomfortable for those from a hot climate, and still too warm for those from very cold places, but it was as close to a 'norm' as could be agreed upon. It was also quiet; there had been a few shuttle malfunctions, necessitating a layover for a couple dozen people in the hours when most transit shuttles were gone already.

He was sure that, if only they would let him sit down with the shuttle, he would be able to figure out what was wrong with it. Well, with enough time and maybe some schematics or computer access, anyway. But he knew that if he had those things -- time, knowledge and tools -- he would be able to eventually figure it out. It didn't yet occur to him that realistically, he had no hopes of being able to provide a fix for a complex piece of equipment like that in the amount of time it would take the station's techs. In his mind, it would be a much bigger and more complicated piece than a working model of the same build, but still entirely fathomable.

And at least when it came to mechanics, Montgomery could fathom things, could understand them, and finally, could *fix* them.

The facts of the situation didn't allow any real escape, though; instead, he could only put his feet up to rest on the edge of the bench, wrap his arms around his shins in a silent, instinctive attempt to feel warmer, and rest his chin on his knees. In this reality he was a ten-year-old in a spaceport, waiting while his mother tried to book alternate passage or a hotel room. It was a fairly secure area; he wasn't the only minor there. He only took any real notice or interest in the other two when he couldn't further debate on what had malfunctioned with the shuttle.

The first was a wee'un; looked about toddler-age. Held by a human woman, but the toddler had pointed ears and that faint greenish cast that meant they almost had to be a Vulcan. The woman looked very tired; she was dressed in plainly-cut clothing of an exotic kind of fabric, dark hair pulled up into a simple style and halfway covered with a scarf. Despite her rather classy appearance, though, there was a warmth and love she practically radiated, holding onto the drowsy child wrapped in a colorful blanket. Nothing aloof. She was plainly waiting, and comforting both herself and the toddler as she waited. Maybe she was a caretaker; Montgomery couldn't have counted the number he'd known in his own life.

The other child was a little older. 'Bout five or six, a wiry lad with a mop of slightly curly brown hair. He looked tired too, but he was swinging his legs under the bench where he was sitting next to a large pile of luggage. It was a fair guess that his parents or guardians were probably trying to do the same thing that everyone else was -- find a way out of here, or a place to sleep.

"I'm hungry," that boy said, not really directed at anyone, apparently just a moment of complaining that had Montgomery squinting in confusion and wondering to what purpose. Saying anything about it wasn't going to fix it, after all.

The woman looked over at the boy with a smile, and the toddler she was holding turned their head as well. "I have some nutrient bars," she said, which-- was a surprise, aye. Her just offering like that. The warmth she had showed the wee'un she was holding was still evident in her voice, too. "Would that work?"

There was a long moment where the boy blushed and looked like he was extremely self-conscious for speaking up in the first place. Embarrassed. Not quite to the level of mortified, though.

"It's all right," she said, with that same patient smile. "I have plenty."

"I'd be much obliged, ma'am," the boy answered, cordially and with an accent that sounded-- well, kind of slow and drawn out. It also sounded like a line that had been rehearsed before; manners that were repeated so many times that they were well on their way to becoming a fundamental part of his speech. He still looked a little sheepish, too. He stood and made his way over to her, not quite hesitantly.

She managed to shuffle the toddler she was holding enough to reach into the carry-on bag she had over her shoulder. "What kind? Strawberry?"

The little lad lit up, and apparently that was all the reply she needed. She chuckled, a pretty sound, and pulled out the right bar to give to the child. He gave her an almost formal bow in response, or half of one. "Thank you, ma'am."

"You're very welcome," she said, and then turned her attention to the ten-year-old who had been silently observing this exchange. "How about you?"

Montgomery felt in that moment like he had just become entirely visible, and it was a disconcerting feeling. Without thought, he drew his knees tighter to his chest, shaking his head before he realized that he'd have to do better than that. It was hard for him to raise his voice enough to actually be heard, but he managed, "No, ma'am, I'm fine. Thanks."

"Are you sure?" she asked, raising an eyebrow slightly. Not a mean look, but a-- he wasn't sure what kind of look it was. Not threatening. Just more disconcerting.

He nodded again, not quite able to look at her face-on. "Aye, I'm sure."

She looked back at him a moment longer, then offered a half-smile. He got the distinct impression she was going to say something else, but then someone else joined the small gathering. A tall Vulcan, in formal clothes. When he stepped into the hall, all eyes were immediately on him; he carried himself like someone that was afforded respect without conscious volition. He had a presence, not entirely tied to his height. He spoke to the woman, quietly, and she nodded and spoke back in the same low tones. His face was impassive, calm. He carefully took the toddler, who immediately got comfortable again on one shoulder of the man who had to be their father, though once the toddler was there, they peered under their father's chin at Montgomery in clear curiosity.

Sharp eyes, the wee Vulcan had; almost despite himself, Montgomery gave back a little grin and wave, which had the toddler picking their head up, eyes widening in interest. But then the conversation ended and the father walked away, taking the toddler with him, ending that little exchange and probably without even knowing it existed in the first place.

The woman, on the other hand, took a moment more after the father turned to leave, stepping over and set a nutrient bar on the bench. "In case you change your mind," she said.

Montgomery felt his face flush; there was an instant war there between gratitude and pride. A certain sense of being affronted or-- something. Not quite insulted, but still a little angry or flustered or something along those lines. He wanted to thank her politely and tell her that he did mean it when he said he was fine coolly -- that he was a bit hungry didn't matter or enter into the equation -- and trapped between those two warring feelings, he wasn't able to say anything. He just rested his chin back on his knees, shoulders pulling inwards, and hoped that she wouldn't say anything else.

She didn't seem to be looking for a reply, though, just turned and followed the tall Vulcan. That left the two remaining children and a few adult stragglers; dignitaries, technicians, professionals. Security guards at the end of the hallway.

The other boy had pretty much gobbled his nutrient bar down, and threw the wrapper away in a nearby receptacle. After that, he peered back across, and looked like he wanted to start talking. Tired still, but apparently feeling better for some food. "She was nice," he said, some of his formality dropping now that it was an adult-free conversation. "My Daddy says that good manners make good people."

Montgomery had no desire whatsoever to debate on manners; the woman was nice, but he still felt a little bit like his pride had been insulted, and he really didn't want to discuss anything with anyone. As such, he didn't reply to that comment.

The other boy must have gotten the idea that his friendliness wasn't making any impression fast, and he made a sour face. "Somethin' to that idea, I guess," he grumbled, raising his voice intentionally loud enough to be heard.

It was impossible not to blink, and even smile a little at that. Not because it was funny, exactly. But just because it was somehow neat that the boy who apparently believed that good manners were a hallmark of civilization wasn't afraid to toss those aside for the sake of taking a verbal potshot when he felt insulted. In the weirdest way, it was almost admirable.

Montgomery didn't take the bait, just stood up and took the nutrient bar the woman had left over, offering it to the other child. It was pretty obvious that the boy was still hungry, and it was just as much a way to soothe his own pride a little. "Here."

"She gave it to you," the boy said, with a vaguely shrewd look, narrowing his blue eyes.

"I dinna want it." Montgomery half-shrugged; he wasn't being untruthful, he really did mean that.

There was a long pause, then the boy took it, the insult fading from his expression. "Thanks."

Mercifully, by the time he finished the second bar, the boy's father turned up. Yet another weary traveler, an older man with hair that looked like it had gone too gray too fast. After a few minutes of coordinating the luggage, he spoke to his son and then headed down the hall. The little boy waved when he left, and Montgomery waved back.

The spaceport went quiet again; the rest of the stragglers drifted away, leaving him and the security guards down the hall, and some new thoughts about what could be wrong with the shuttle, even though he honestly didn't have the faintest clue. But it gave him something to think about, something to get lost in. Something to chew over that would keep his mind off of the chill, or his own tiredness, or any before or after.

He settled into his own thoughts, and waited.

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