

the days of miracle and wonder

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by [meriwethersays](#)

Summary

Jim looks at Dean, and maybe it's the speed at which he's drinking Romulan ale on an empty stomach, but he finds himself thinking that Dean knows what it is to be left behind. It's a stupid thing to ask, but he does—"Which one of them died and which one left?"

Dean grips his glass almost violently. "Mom," he grits out. "When I was four. Dad was—complicated."

Jim thinks of his own mother, out in space for most of his life. "Yeah. I know what you mean. "

A spatial anomaly deposits two time-travelers and a damn fine car on Jim's ship.

Notes

The particular exchange in the fic summary popped into my head, and this fic followed.

It helps if you've seen Supernatural, but hey, Jim and Spock never have and they manage just fine.

One minute, they're lazily proceeding at impulse power toward a set of octenary stars that Jim knows Spock is just dying to scan for hours, for all that Spock would never show it (Jim brings these things to him, like a cat offering up a dead bird, and Spock only stares at him impassively every time). The next minute, Sulu is saying, "Um, Captain?"

"I see it," Jim says, though he's not sure he believes it. It's almost invisible, floating out in the blackness of space, but the light from the closest of the octenary stars flashes off the chrome of the fenders. "Oh sh—" There are *people* inside. "Scotty, lock onto the life signs and get a tractor beam on that car right now!" The old cars he's seen weren't exactly airtight, and this one has seen her share of trouble.

"Energizing now." He sees the shimmer of golden light inside the car's cockpit—he can't recall what they used to call it—and a moment later, the glow of Enterprise's tractor beam envelops it. "Captain, you'd better get down here."

Jim looks over to Spock, whose slightly quirked eyebrow suggests that he's more than mildly intrigued by—whatever's happening. "On my way. Spock, with me." As they hurry through the corridors, he asks, "How the hell did a car like that end up floating in space?"

"I do not have sufficient information to form a hypothesis."

"Come on, guess." It's one of Jim's great goals in life to get Spock to do something as illogical as *guessing* with insufficient information. "Gun to your head, what's going on?"

"There is no firearm to my head," Spock tells him delicately.

Jim wants to argue, but they walk into the transporter room and very abruptly there *is* a gun trained on their heads. There are two men, both—well, both beautiful, Jim can multitask—braced for a fight. One of them has a very old-fashioned gun in his hand, something out of a Western holonovel, and he's got it trained on Scotty. "What the fuck is happening?"

"Dean," the other man says. He's dark-haired, in a ratty tan coat, and he puts a quelling hand on (presumably) Dean's arm. "I do not believe

that they intend to harm us.”

“Oh yeah? What was that—we were floating in *space*, and now all of a sudden we’re in this prison room—” He looks at Jim and mumbles something that sounds like *christo*.

“Hey!” Jim is a little insulted. “This is the transporter room. You’re on a ship—a starship,” he adds, because he’s not sure Dean would think of that. “My ship. Enterprise. We saw you floating out in space and beamed you in before you suffocated or froze to death.”

Dean goes pale. “My car,” he croaks. “What happened to my car?” The other man hasn’t lifted his hand from Dean’s arm.

Jim glances at Scotty, who nods. “We brought it onto the ship with a tractor beam,” he says. Dean gapes at him like Jim is an idiot. “It’s fine.”

Dean lowers his gun and turns a little to glare at the other man. “Okay, Cas, who is it this time? Zachariah? *Gabriel*? Because I gotta tell you, I’m not in the mood—”

Cas(?) frowns. “Lower your weapon, Dean.” Jim sees him exert a little more pressure on Dean’s arm and Dean does it, turning his eyes to Cas’s face. “I do not believe that this is a—ploy by Heaven.” Whatever that means.

Dean holsters the gun. “Don’t tell me,” he says to Cas. “Time travel?” He looks back at Jim and demands, “What year is it?”

Next to Jim, Spock clears his throat minutely. Jim knows what he’s thinking—don’t disrupt the timeline, don’t tell him anything, the Temporal Wars are over—but he’s not going to leave Dean thinking that there’s some big secret they’re keeping from him. If he was going to do that, he might as well just stun them both right now and lock them up until Spock figures out what to do. But there’s something desperate and kindred in Dean’s face, and if Jim woke up floating in space, he’d want to know what the hell had just happened. “2261.”

“Bullshit.” Cas’s arm is the only thing keeping Dean from pulling his gun again.

“Dean,” Cas says urgently. “I believe he is telling the truth.”

“You’re telling me we’re more than 250 years in the future? And none of your buddies upstairs had anything to do with it?”

Spock finally bothers to speak up. “We are in an octenary star system that is in the process of transitioning from trapezoidal to hierarchical. Your—conveyance appeared at the barycenter. It is possible that the variable gravitational forces, coupled with the distinct radiation of—”

“Jeez, sorry I asked.” Dean looks from Spock to Scotty to Jim. His shoulders relax fractionally, and Cas’s hand loosens on his arm. “You said you saved my car?”

* * *

Once he’s assured himself that the car he calls Baby is intact, Dean is fascinated by everything on Enterprise.

“Captain,” Spock warns when he sees Dean poking at a console. “This has the potential to destabilize the timeline severely—”

“Relax,” he tells Spock. “You really think he’s going to learn something on Enterprise that could be harmful to the timeline, a guy like him, from two and a half centuries ago?” Of course, Khan was from the past too, and he did more damage to Enterprise than Jim wants to remember.

“It is reckless,” Spock says stiffly. Jim can’t help but notice that Castiel (Dean corrected him sharply the first time he said ‘Cas’) trails after Dean, looking a little lost. He never lets his eyes leave Dean for very long.

What’s the worst that could happen, Jim wants to say. “All right,” he says instead. “We’ll have drinks. Occupy our mouths another way.”

Spock doesn’t even raise an eyebrow at that. Jim has been escalating the innuendos over the last four months—ever since the mission when Spock came back mussed and a little bloody and missing most of his uniform and Jim briefly lost his mind and began patting him down for injuries until McCoy shoved him out of the way and did it with a tricorder. Later, Spock went a little crazy too and bent Jim over the bed in the infirmary, kicked his legs open wide and fucked him there with Chapel just on the other side of the containment field—but apparently it was just some pollen or something, because ever since, Spock has demonstrated a fundamental lack of interest in Jim. It hurts a little every time Jim thinks about it too much.

“Hey, Dean!” Castiel inserts himself between Jim and Dean reflexively. Jeez. “You want something to drink?”

Dean looks relieved. Castiel does not. “Still got beer in the 23rd century?”

“Romulan ale, you’ll love it.” Everyone loves Romulan ale, at least when they’re drinking it. “Come on, we’ve got a crew lounge—” He sees the minute twitch of Spock’s mouth at the idea of exposing time-travelers to their modern-day crew. Right. “I’ve got some comfy chairs in my quarters—perks of being the captain.”

“I am afraid I must decline,” Spock says. “We have gathered extensive data on the stars in this system, which may be useful in calculating the likely trajectory of the barycenter. I must examine it immediately if we are to find a way to return our guests to their own time.”

“May I assist you?” Castiel doesn’t talk much, but he pipes up now. “It is possible that my—complementary understanding of the universe will aid in resolving the problem.” He sounds a little too much like Spock when he says things like that. It’s very confusing.

Spock nods stiffly. “That would be logical.”

Jim looks to Dean, and there’s a long minute where he can see Dean considering—where he knows that Dean knows what’ll probably happen

if the two of them go back to his quarters and start drinking. Jim lets it show in his eyes, because why shouldn't he get to have nice things sometimes, just because he's stupid about Spock? Dean grins just a little, and he doesn't look away from Jim when he says, "Yeah, I could use a drink."

They leave Castiel and Spock behind. Dean whistles when the doors to Jim's quarters slide open automatically. "Nice place. I think we got a motel room a little like this when I was in Cincinnati one time."

Jim tries to see it through his eyes—a big bed that's too empty most of the time, big windows looking out onto the vastness of space, two uncomfortable couches and two chairs in a strange little sitting area at the other end of the room. He loves Enterprise, but this room isn't what he loves about her. He's not sure if Dean was actually complimenting the room or insulting it. "I didn't have much junk when I joined Starfleet." There's a jumble of stuff in his ready room, artifacts and trinkets and gifts and holoframes that he's acquired since he's been captain of the Enterprise, but he keeps it there. It would look lonely in here, he thinks.

Dean nods. "Everything I own is in my car." He says it casually, but Jim remembers how frantic he was when he thought the car had been left behind. "We sleep in motels, mostly."

"You and—Castiel?"

"Me and my brother. Cas has been around more lately, but he used to just appear and disappear." Dean makes a flapping motion like wings. Jim doesn't push it. "You said something about a drink?"

"Yeah, sure. Sit down." There's a fizzing along Jim's shoulders and down his spine, a pleasure in the delicious inevitability of what's going to happen when one of them gets around to it. He goes to the replicator. "I can do something else if you don't really want Romulan ale. Maybe even some old Earth classic"

Dean grins and shakes his head. He presses a thumb to his lips like he's thinking, and fuck, his mouth, Jim has been carefully not paying too much attention. "Might as well try something new as long as I'm here."

"A bottle of Romulan ale and two glasses," Jim tells the replicator. He hears Dean's noise of surprise as they appear.

"No way I'm getting used to that." Dean's eyes linger on the machine itself as Jim walks over to the couch next to Dean's chair and deposits the glasses and bottle on a table between them. "Guess nobody goes hungry here, huh?"

Jim can't help thinking of Tarsus, of learning that if he went long enough without food he could start persuading himself that he wasn't hungry. "Yeah," he says, and it rings false enough that Dean jerks his eyes over to meet Jim's.

"Yeah," Dean echoes. "We drinking or what?" He reaches for the bottle.

When he starts to pour himself a hefty glass, Jim warns, "Watch out, it's strong. Romulans have very different metabolisms than Humans."

Dean sniffs it. "Huh. Is that what your—officer Spock is? He's an alien, right?" He gestures at his own ears.

Jim pours his glass a little fuller than he usually would. "He's half-Vulcan, half-Human. Vulcans are genetically related to Romulans, but the species branched off a long time ago." He holds up his glass and knocks it against Dean's, and they both down it in three long gulps. It hits Jim all at once, a warm shiver running through him.

Dean whistles. Jim watches the pucker of his lips as they shape the noise. "Nice," Dean says. "Better than any beer I've ever had. Spock, is he—human enough?" At Jim's blank expression, Dean makes a kind of obscene gesture. "You know."

"Oh. We're not like that, me and him." Jim says it too quickly and hurries to pour them both another glass.

"Yeah, isn't everybody," Dean says nonsensically. "I'm not surprised Cas took to him so quickly. Birds of a feather and shit."

That answers one question. "Spock will figure out how to get you guys home soon," Jim assures him, and for some reason it seems to weigh heavily on Dean's shoulders.

"No rush," Dean says. "Hey, if we're just gonna go back to the same point in time, this is all a freebie, right? Whatever time we get to spend here?" He laughs without much humor in it. "Sam used to tell me we should take a vacation once in a while. He's gonna be so pissed that he missed this one. He's a nerd, he'd be so into it."

"I—Temporal Mechanics wasn't my best subject at the Academy," Jim admits, and then realizes Spock would probably be unhappy at him for revealing that much. "Um, but yeah, I guess you'll go right back. Probably." Dean looks impossibly weary. "Tell me about what you do," Jim says. "You can't mess up the timeline if you tell me about the past."

Dean snorts. "Well, up until a year ago, me and my brother mostly drove around the country, saving people, hunting—things. Then everything went to Hell," and he says that strangely, with a capital H, "and then Cas showed up to make our lives unbelievably complicated. But sometimes we still get to save people and gank a ghost or two." He doesn't sound happy about any of it. "And Cas—isn't so bad to have around." There's a certain strangled quality voice as he says it that Jim knows too well.

"I used to think I'd been to hell," Jim admits. He wouldn't say it if Dean didn't sound so sure about hell. Dean raises an eyebrow. "My stepdad—got rid of me when I was a teenager, sent me off-planet to a brand-new colony. Turned out the whole thing was a big eugenics experiment. They killed off four thousand people right away, kept the ones they wanted and then tried to starve out the rest of us." He can hear the screams anytime he lets himself. "I killed—people. To get out of there." He's never even told Spock this, but there's something about Dean that says he knows, that he'll understand it better than anyone ever could.

"Yeah," Dean says. "I hurt a lot of people when I was in Hell." He doesn't elaborate on what there was like for him. He clears his throat and finishes off his second glass of Romulan ale. "Guess it's good to know you can still be fucked up in the future too."

Jim looks at Dean, and maybe it's the speed at which he's drinking Romulan ale on an empty stomach, but he finds himself thinking that Dean knows what it is to be left behind. It's a stupid thing to ask, but he does—"Which one of them died and which one left?"

Dean grips his glass almost violently. "Mom," he grits out. "When I was four. A demon. Dad was—complicated."

Jim thinks of his own mother, out in space for most of his life. "Yeah. I know what you mean. My mom used to come around a couple times a year." He kicks at Dean's ankle. "Sorry, I didn't mean to bring you back here for—"

"Nah." Dean hooks his foot around Jim's, and his grin suddenly reappears. "You were thinking something else when you invited me back here for a drink." He half-stands, half-stumbles over Jim's feet, and lands on the couch next to Jim. "Hey," he says, very close, and then his mouth is on Jim's. It's been a long time since someone kissed Jim like this, filthy and uncomplicated, Dean's tongue curling around his with a kind of intent that has him hard just sitting there. For all he's kind of in love with Spock, Jim can appreciate a person like Dean, a person who presses Jim into the couch with his hips and lets Jim rut against him while Dean drags his own shirt over his head. Dean is lean, with the kind of muscle that comes from heavy use, and there's a massive handprint scar on his arm like someone grabbed him with burning hands. Jim can't help reaching up to touch it, but Dean catches his hand quickly with a smile and redirects Jim's hand to the fly of his pants. Jim wonders who left the handprint.

They roll off the couch while Jim is trying to get Dean's pants open, and somehow Jim ends up on the bottom. "I was gonna say coin flip," Dean says, "but I'm good with this." He slides down Jim's body, taking Jim's pants with him, and then he sucks Jim's cock into his mouth in one long swallow. Jim shouts and yanks Dean's short hair hard without meaning to. But Dean pulls almost all the way off, another long wet slide, and keeps his lips tight around the head of Jim's cock, flicking his tongue across the slit.

"Fuck, fuck," Jim says, because Dean's mouth looks like it was made for this, his shining lips stretched around Jim's cock. "Fuck—you're good—" His options here on Enterprise are almost nil, and it's been a long time since any shore leave.

Dean stops long enough to say "Don't pull my hair" against Jim's cock, and then takes him down deep again. Jim grabs at the floor, at the frame of the couch, anything to anchor him, because Dean's mouth is hot and wet and his tongue is fucking dancing along Jim's cock. He slides down further, until his lips are at the base of Jim's cock and Jim is in his fucking throat, like Dean doesn't have a goddamn gag reflex. Dean swallows around him, his throat tightening around Jim's cock, and there are stars dancing in front of Jim's eyes. Then Dean's mouth is gone, his fingers playing with Jim's balls as he says, "Let me fuck you," like Jim has to be fucking persuaded. Jim can see the shape of Dean's cock bulging in his underwear and hell yeah, Jim wants that inside him.

"Yeah," Jim pants, "yeah," and this time when Dean swallows his cock down, he presses one finger against Jim's hole. "I'm gonna," Jim says, and Dean pulls off. "Are you fucking kidding—"

"D'you have anything?" Dean pushes the tip of his finger inside for emphasis while Jim tries to make sense of what he's saying.

"Tell the replicator," Jim finally manages, and it's a heroic effort to not just touch himself and come now. Still, when Dean sheepishly asks the replicator, "Lube—uh, lubricant?" and the replicator chirps, "Water or silicone-based?" he cracks up and thinks it was worth it.

"Man, what else do these things make?" Dean drops down next to him and his fingers are already shining and wet. "Roll over," he says, and Jim usually likes it face to face but there's something so good about trying to anticipate Dean's touch, about the quiet "fuck" that Dean utters when he slides the first finger easily inside Jim. "So it's not like that with Spock, huh?"

"No," Jim pants, because it's not, it's only him in his empty bed thinking about that mission, about the way Spock grabbed at him like he wanted Jim desperately. "Are you going to fuck me or what?"

Dean laughs and bites at the small of Jim's back and thrusts two slick fingers in at once. There, that's the feeling Jim wants, and he thrusts back onto Dean's fingers. Dean swears and pulls his fingers out, and Jim hears the rustle of cloth and the wet noise of Dean slicking his cock. When Dean starts to push inside, it punches all the air out of Jim and Dean says, "You good?"

Jim thrusts his hips back as an answer and Dean groans as his cock sinks further into Jim. It's fast, maybe faster than Jim would usually go but now that he's thought of it, he can't help thinking of that time in the infirmary with Spock, of how his cock had spread Jim open, of how Jim had been sore and wrung-out the next day when Spock apologized for his inappropriate conduct—

"Hey," Dean says, and smacks his ass lightly. "Don't go thinking too much." He grabs Jim's hips and snaps his hips forward and yeah, that's worth paying attention to as Dean's cock fills him, at the glide of Dean's cock and the way Dean swears when he clenches around him. He adjusts Jim's hips a little and then he's fucking hitting Jim's prostate—not with every stroke, maybe every third, but it has Jim lit up all through his body. Every cell of his body wants to come—his cock is hard and leaking, a couple strokes and he would—but there's something even better in this, in knowing that he's almost there and feeling his body wind tighter and tighter—

"Captain!"

"Dean!"

He knows without looking that Spock and Castiel are standing in the doorway, staring. Jim doesn't know if he or Dean comes first but he's almost sobbing with it and he can feel Dean spurt inside him. He lifts his head slowly as Dean slides out and yes, there they are. Spock's expression is somewhere between dismay and disappointment. Castiel looks like he's just hit his head very hard, eyes wide and pink mouth shaped in a silent O of surprise, and Jim watches his gaze roam across Dean's body. So. Not like that for Dean and Castiel either, then.

"Did you find something, Mr. Spock?" Jim has always been very good at dissociating. He starts to put his uniform back on. "Spock?" He raises an eyebrow. "Is there a reason for the interruption?"

“Yes,” Castiel says, and then stops.

“Cas, buddy, we talked about this.” Jim can hear the forced casualness in Dean’s tone. Fuck, is that what he sounds like when he talks to Spock? “That’s the kind of yes-or-no question that needs explanation.”

“I intended to let Mr. Spock provide that explanation,” Castiel says stiffly.

“I see you found a way to occupy yourselves without risking further contamination of the timeline.” Spock’s voice is equally stiff.

“No risk of a grandfather paradox,” Jim points out—quite logically, he thinks. “Whatever you found out must’ve been pretty urgent,” he prompts.

“Yes,” Castiel says again. “Very urgent.” He watches the play of Dean’s muscles as Dean pulls his shirt back over his head. “Dean.”

“The explanation?” Dean prompts. His eyes dart to Castiel’s and then away.

“Based on my calculations, we have begun to reprogram the transporter to beam the vehicle, containing Dean and Castiel, directly into the path of the barycenter. The combination will return them all to their time and place with a minimum of disruption to the timeline.” If Jim didn’t know Spock so well, he’d think that Spock was completely unbothered, but he’s learned to spot the flickers, the variations in tone, that convey Spock’s suppressed emotions. “However, because the path of the barycenter is difficult to predict more than a few minutes in advance and the transport location must be precise to trigger the return, we will have one opportunity.”

“We should act immediately, Dean,” Castiel says, and he sounds strangely apologetic. His eyes follow Dean’s fingers as Dean does up the buttons of his jeans.

*Dean’s mouth pulls into a sad smile. “So much for our time-travel vacation from the apocalypse.” When he walks to the door, Spock steps politely out of his way, but Castiel remains. Dean pauses in front of him, and for a moment something passes between them that Jim can’t name but *understands*, viscerally.*

Spock wasn’t kidding about the urgency, apparently (not that Spock would ever kid about something like that). He marches them efficiently to the turbolift and back to the cargo bay where Dean’s car waits. “Sit as you were before,” he tells them.

“Thank you for your assistance,” Castiel says, and walks around to the passenger side. There’s the slightest unhappy creak when he opens the door, but it opens all the same. Everything Dean owns is in this car, Jim remembers. His own Enterprise.

“Excuse me,” Spock says. “I must complete the final calculations. Dean, you should return to your seat as well.” He walks out of the cargo bay, every step precise.

Dean stands at the door to his car, one hand on the handle. “Look,” he says, “Jim—I know you can’t tell me anything—specific. Timeline and all. But—the world survived okay, right? Earth? You’re not only out here because it all—because the apocalypse happened, more or less, and the angels and demons fought it out across the whole world and killed everyone and only a few people escaped alive?”

Jim’s heart aches. He thinks of the eugenics wars, of the Augments and the tens of millions of people who died. For all he knows, those are the demons that Dean’s talking about, and all of that is still in Dean’s future. But Dean looks so desperate to believe that Jim has to give him something. “I grew up most of my life in Riverside, Iowa,” he tells Dean quietly. “On Earth.”

The tension drains out of Dean’s shoulders for a second and his smile is heartbreaking. “I guess Team Free Will wins after all,” he says. “Thanks, man.”

“Dean, the timing must be precise!” Castiel’s voice is insistent from the passenger seat.

“Yeah, yeah, I’m coming!” Dean flashes Jim an echo of his earlier dirty grin and sits in the driver’s seat, then swings the door closed. He pushes a flat rectangle into the car’s dashboard and Jim hears the loud, angry opening notes of something classical. “Let’s do this.”

Jim steps back from the car. “Scotty, on Spock’s mark, energize to the coordinates he gives you!”

“Transmitting coordinates now,” Spock says on the heels of his words, and the car dissolves into golden light in front of Jim. He sees the faintest flicker of the car out in what he hopes is the barycenter, and then it’s gone.

* * *

It’s like Dean and Castiel took all the energy out of Jim when they disappeared. He leaves the cargo bay and meanders through the corridors until he reaches his ready room, where he can lean against the window and stare out at the blinding light of the octenary stars.

“Jim.”

“Jesus, Spock!” Jim didn’t even hear the doors slide open. “I thought you’d be—scanning, or something, now that they’re gone.” He can’t quite look away from the stars.

From the corner of his eye, he sees Spock approach until he reaches the window too, less than a meter away. “I determined that my presence was not necessary for the moment.”

“Do they—live?” Jim thinks he does a pretty good job of keeping his voice even, but—maybe not so much. “I mean, I know they’re dead by now no matter what, but—do they live to first contact, at least? Get to meet another Vulcan?”

Spock is silent for a long time. “The records of that period are extremely fragmented,” he says at last. “I was able to confirm the existence of

a person named Dean Winchester, born in the appropriate year, and the death of his mother four years later. I was unable to locate any other documentation that would answer your question.”

“Do you think they do?”

Spock hesitates. “...Gun to my head, I—would like to think that they do. ”

Jim turns and stares at him. Of all the things for Spock to finally choose to speculate about. “I couldn’t make myself look it up.” He hopes they did, but he also hopes that if not, Dean died before he had to see the world collapse.

“I am aware that you found Dean—” Spock stops like he can’t find quite the right word, or doesn’t want to reveal what he thinks it is. Spock won’t meet his eyes.

It’s that more than anything that makes him say, “Dean’s in love with Castiel, you know.”

“I understood humans of that time period to consider monogamous behavior an essential element of—romantic attachment.” Spock says it a little meanly, and he still won’t look at Jim.

“Believe me, Spock, you can meet a good-looking guy who knows what it’s like and enjoy yourself while being very much in love with someone else.” Jim doesn’t have the guts to say it any more bluntly than that, and he knows that Spock pretends to understand only the very plainest of Human speech, which means this isn’t much of a confession.

Instead of acknowledging anything he just said, Spock says, “Castiel spoke frequently of Dean during our work.”

Jim closes his eyes. The light of the stars is red against the insides of his eyelids. “Oh? I wouldn’t’ve thought you guys would’ve talked about much other than science.”

“Yes.” Spock’s voice is halting. “His understanding of astrophysics involved a great deal of illogical religious metaphor. But it seemed that Dean was—always in his thoughts. Their lives involve frequent mortal peril.”

“Yeah, whose lives don’t.” Jim means it as a joke, but it sounds thin when he says it aloud.

“In our discussion of possible physical alterations to their bodies that might affect the travel, Castiel said that he had once raised Dean from perdition back to life.” Jim thinks of that handprint seared onto Dean’s arm and doesn’t doubt it. “It made me remember—” Spock hesitates. “However illogically phrased, Castiel’s statement caused me to recall the circumstances of your death and—resurrection.”

“Technically, it was Khan’s blood that raised me,” Jim says, because Spock had his chance, didn’t he. He cried and pressed his hand to Jim’s through the glass and then never said a word about it, “and Bones who concocted the treatment—” Spock is somehow much closer than he was before, his body next to Jim’s. “You just—retrieved Khan—to save me—”

“Jim.” Spock faces him, finally, and Jim can’t help but turn to look at him now. It’s the starlight that makes his eyes so hypnotic, Jim tells himself. It’s the starlight that makes Jim think he sees something new in Spock’s eyes. “You said Dean ‘knows what it’s like.’”

“Well, in that sentence, I think I was actually referring to myself, but sure.” If every minute with Dean had felt pleasantly inevitable, this moment with Spock feels unimaginably fragile. “I thought you were telling me about your realization.”

Spock flinches slightly. Jim only sees it because he’s staring into Spock’s eyes, and he hopes he hasn’t broken whatever—this—is about to be. “Your life seems to involve more mortal peril than that of most Starfleet personnel,” Spock says. He’s close enough that Jim can almost feel his breath when he speaks.

“You did try to choke me to death the first time you were close enough to reach,” Jim says stupidly.

“I do not want to watch you die again.”

Jim wonders wildly if that’s supposed to be some kind of Vulcan declaration. “I don’t want to watch you die either.”

Spock makes a very illogical noise of frustration, pushes Jim up against the window, and kisses him.

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