

The Little Things

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The Little Things

by [VelvetMouse](#)

Summary

Sometimes, it was the little things that counted the most.

Notes

Written for the 2012 LJ mccoys_chapel holiday exchange. Filling the prompt "The little things, something built around Chapel or McCoy doing little sweet gestures for the other after both a hard day and just because"

"You'll never guess what I got a reminder for this morning on my calendar."

Christine Chapel looked at her boss in confusion for a moment and then started adding up months and weeks in her head. They had been out on their first tour for nearly eighteen months now. Which meant -

Christine groaned in realization.

"It's not spring cleaning time again, is it?"

"fraid so, Chris. I've already cleared it with the captain. We'll set up temporary shop in the lab, but we'll be at DS2 for seventy-two hours, so anything big will go down to the station there anyway."

Christine groaned again and thumped her head against the wall lightly. "Spring Cleaning," as the Academy instructors had always called it, involved not only doing a complete inventory of everything in Sickbay, but taking apart, disinfecting, scrubbing and otherwise sterilizing absolutely everything. The planning for it alone took a week.

And as Head Nurse and CMO, she and McCoy got to run the whole damned thing. Joy.

The first time they had gone through it was only six months into their journey, so the squeaky newness of sickbay hadn't worn off. Christine figured they had only touched about half the equipment by that point, but she knew they wouldn't be so lucky this time.

They had not been. Their seventy-two hour stopover at DS2 had mercifully been extended to a full week, when it was discovered that the decontamination units had to be completely recalibrated before they either began producing goulash or turning their occupants into rabbits. Christine wasn't clear on which. All she knew was that Scotty spent half a day elbow deep in the control panels for the units before throwing his hands up in disgust and turning the whole project over to Gaila.

Still, they had somehow survived, and at the end of the week, she found herself in McCoy's office finishing off the last of the reports. McCoy had promised to meet her there, but so far he was conspicuously absent.

The smell hit her before she saw him.

"Is that what I think it is?"

"Possibly."

"Pizza?"

"Ahuh."

"Real, honest to god, made from flour and tomatoes and cheese, not replicated or made on Tau Sigma V, pizza?"

"Ahuh."

"I think I love you."

She was so busy communing with the mouth-searing cheese that she missed his pole-axed expression.

"I'm sorry, Captain, could you repeat that? I don't think I heard you correctly." Christine folded her arms and gave Kirk her best nurse's glare.

Jim glared back and set his jaw. Then he slumped and ran one hand across his face, suddenly looking exhausted. "I don't like this any better than you do, Chris. But the delegation is insistent that Bones is the only member of Starfleet that they will allow onto their planet. And they refuse to allow their leader off-planet. And Starfleet Command is insisting we follow their requests."

"So we're just supposed to let him go down there, by himself, not speaking the language, never having worked with any of their nurses, with equipment he's unfamiliar with, and perform what on humans is a six hour procedure, and who knows what complications he's going to run into with the Telemachan's similar-but-different anatomy?"

"Yes."

"Dammit, Jim!"

"I know. I know." He stepped forward and pulled her into a hug. Christine tensed for a moment, not wanting to be mollified, but quickly gave in and rested her head on his shoulder. "All we can do is keep things running smoothly up here, while he's performing miracles down there," he said into her hair.

Christine sighed. "I guess. Doesn't mean I have to like it though."

"I know the feeling."

She stepped back and squared her shoulders, putting on her professional mask, and followed her captain out of his ready room. They had a ship to run.

Twelve hours later, McCoy made his way from the transporter room to his quarters by muscle memory alone, stumbling from exhaustion. He blinked several times when his door opened, as his brain tried to process the fact something was not as it should be.

Gentle hands drew him inside the room.

"You look like hell," a familiar voice said.

He shook his head slightly, trying to clear it.

"Chris?"

"Who else would it be, you silly man?"

Her deft hands worked quickly, stripping him of his shirts before he could register what was happening. She turned him around to face the open door of the bathroom and gave him a light swat on the ass to get him moving.

"There's a bath drawn for you. Jim used his override, so it didn't even take any water credits. Go get in, I'll be there in a minute with something for you to eat."

"But - "

"He also supplied the bubbles, so your modesty will be preserved. Get."

McCoy chuckled and complied, not wanting to risk Christine's wrath. And really, he didn't have the energy to fight her.

A few moments later, sunk into the tub of warm soapy water, he couldn't come up with any reason that he should object, either. He had never been one for baths, but he was beginning to see the appeal.

Just as he was contemplating closing his eyes a large mug appeared in front of his face.

"I know you probably don't have the energy to eat anything solid, but you do need some sustenance," Christine's voice said from somewhere

over his left shoulder.

He grasped the mug carefully and inhaled the warm, spicy scent. He sank back against the tub and blissfully sipped the soup, enjoying the feeling of being warm inside and out.

"Love you," he mumbled.

Because his eyes were closed, he missed Christine's brilliant smile as she crept quietly out of the room.

At first, Christine wasn't sure if she was imagining things. She could be, she rationalized, still in the blissful I've-just-been-married state. Everything just seemed to go more smoothly in the days following the wedding.

Inventory lists magically completed themselves and appeared on her PADD. Cabinets restocked themselves overnight. Shift changes sorted themselves out without the usual wrangling, instruments seemed to walk themselves over to the autoclave, and there wasn't one lost tricorder in four days, which had to be some kind of record.

It wasn't until she discovered that the transfer paperwork for one of her nurses had been mysteriously - and correctly - completed that she started to get suspicious. There were only a few people on the ship who had the authority to approve a transfer. She cornered the most likely candidate over dinner.

"I know they say that marriage is supposed to change a man, but really? Voluntarily doing my paperwork? Isn't that a little over the top?" she asked her husband of less than a week.

McCoy blinked and frowned. "Would this be a bad time to admit that I have absolutely no idea what you're talking about, darlin'?"

He looked so worried that Christine couldn't help but laugh. She patted his hand. "It's okay, dear. But if it wasn't you, who was it?"

"Maybe if you actually explained to me what you're talking about, I would have an answer for you."

"For the last few days, everything has been going ridiculously smoothly. At first I thought it was my imagination, or maybe just a run of good luck. But then I discovered this morning that the paperwork for Misiganda's transfer to xenobiology had been completed - correctly. So unless I've started doing paperwork in my sleep, which, by the way, would be a really neat trick, there's something going on."

McCoy blinked. "So, wait, that wasn't you? The paperwork completed, everything being neatly organized for me?"

The newlyweds stared at each other across the table. As one, they turned to the corner of the dining hall where the captain was sitting with his yeoman and communications officer.

Christine rose and strode across the room. She stopped behind Kirk's chair, feeling McCoy's solid presence at her shoulder, and glared at the back of her captain's head until he turned around.

"Yes?" he asked, turning around with wide, innocent eyes. "May I help you?"

"Brat," Christine said affectionately, and cuffed him on the back of the head. She noticed that Janice's eyes were dancing with suppressed mirth, and the corners of Nyota's mouth kept twitching.

"I think they figured it out," Janice said.

Kirk pouted up at his friends. "You couldn't have held off for another two days? Then I would have won the pool."

"So it was you, then?" Christine asked, smiling at last.

Kirk nodded. "A bunch of us, really." He looked up at his friends seriously. "I hate the fact that we can't let you go on a proper honeymoon for a few months yet. So we decided to do what we could to make your lives easier, at least for a while."

"You silly man," Christine said, and bent over to give him a kiss on the cheek.

"So does that mean you want us to stop?"

"No!" The answer was in perfect stereo, and caused both Janice and Nyota to start laughing.

"Thank you," Christine said. "Thank all of you, and anyone else who is involved. We really do appreciate it. Now that it's not making me doubt my sanity, anyway."

McCoy clapped a hand on Kirk's shoulder. "Thanks, kid. You've got a good heart."

Kirk pretended to look stricken. "Shh! Don't say that so loud. I don't want anyone to know!" he protested.

The group dissolved into laughter again, and Christine pulled over two chairs so they could join their friends. She was, she reflected, pretty damned lucky to be where she was and with the people she was with. Sometimes, it was the little things that counted the most.

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