

No Choice At All

Posted originally on the [Ad Astra :: Star Trek Fanfiction Archive](http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/202) at <http://www.adastrafanfic.com/works/202>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	F/M
Fandom:	Star Trek: Alternate Original Series
Relationship:	Christine Chapel (AOS)/Leonard "Bones" McCoy (AOS)
Character:	Christine Chapel (AOS) , Leonard "Bones" McCoy (AOS) , James T. Kirk (AOS)
Additional Tags:	Team as Family
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2011-01-06 Words: 2,371 Chapters: 1/1

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by [VelvetMouse](#)

Summary

For Christine, it's a no-brain decision. For McCoy, it's incomprehensible.

Notes

Recipient: valoscope

Prompt: Chapel or McCoy performs some kind of act of self-sacrifice for the other. How does s/he respond? Happy endings, whether suggested or blatant, would be nice. Fic, any rating.

I took a few liberties with the "self-sacrifice" thing, so I hope you still enjoy this.

huge thanks to jules for helping me work out the medical details, and to seren for her usual awesome betaing. Any remaining mistakes are my own, despite their best efforts...

Written for the 2010 🍷mccoy_chapel Holiday Exchange.

The sound of swearing coming from the CMO's office was not unusual. Christine had long ago learned to tune it out. The sound of a tray of instruments clattering to the floor, however, was most unexpected, and the loud sound in the otherwise quiet sickbay caused the Head Nurse to nearly jump out of her skin.

"God dammit, Bones, what the hell do you think you're doing?" she scolded as she made her way to the open office door. When she did not receive the expected snappish reply, she stuck her head through the doorway.

The hypos and accompanying tray were on the floor at the doctor's feet, and he stood transfixed, staring at the PADD in his hand.

"Enterprise to Dr. McCoy?" Christine said teasingly. "Hellllooooo? Bones?" When he still did not respond, she touched his arm gently. "Len? What's wrong?"

The sound of his name seemed to bring McCoy back to reality and he blinked at Christine several times. "Chris?" he said hesitantly. "Oh, Chris. I've - I've got to find Jim."

Then it was Christine's turn to blink in confusion as her CMO shoved the PADD into her hands and hustled out the door. He *never* called her 'Chris' while they were on duty. It was always 'Nurse Chapel' or at least 'Christine.'

"McCoy!" she called after him. "Bones! Dammit!" She began to rush out the door, but then glanced down at the PADD in her hand. It was open to a message, and Christine hesitated, not wanting to invade her friend's privacy. But then the words "Joanna" and "transfusion" and "donor" practically jumped out at her, and she stopped and slowly read the whole message.

"Oh my god," she breathed. She whipped her head around, and spotted the person she needed.

"Nurse Moyer! Contact Dr. M'Benga and let him know that McCoy is off duty as of right now, and will be for an indefinite period of time. I'm going to go track him down and see what we need to do. You're in charge until M'Benga gets here."

"But - "

"Just do it, Jessica," Christine snapped. "I don't have time to argue or explain. Just get M'Benga here as quick as you can."

Christine stormed out the door, thinking furiously. She smacked the first comm panel she came across, harder than was strictly necessary.

"Chapel to Uhura. Chapel to Uhura. Come on, Ny. I need you."

"Uhura here. What's going on, Chris?"

"Is the captain on the bridge right now?"

"Yes, although there's not much going on."

"Good. Bones is on his way up to find him. When he gets there, get him and Jim into Jim's ready room. I'll be there in a few minutes too. And we'll probably need Spock, too," Christine said, thinking hard.

"Christine, you're scaring me. What's going on?"

"I'll explain when I get there, you can join us too. Oh, and tell Janny to grab a bottle of the single malt that the captain has hidden away. This is definitely an emergency. Chapel out."

Christine practically ran through the halls to the turbolift and tapped her foot impatiently, waiting for it to arrive. Once she was in and had entered her destination, she let out a long breath, and reviewed the message one more time. A glimmer of an idea was beginning to form, but she needed more information.

She tapped thoughtfully on the PADD for a moment and then navigated her way into some of the ship's databases that, strictly speaking, she shouldn't have access to.

By the time she got to the bridge, she had the beginnings of a plan. It was crazy, it was nuts, it probably went against half a dozen Starfleet regulations. But there was no reason it wouldn't work.

Ensign Navil, Nyota's preferred replacement at the Communications station, merely pointed to the set of doors that led to the captain's ready room, and Christine saw Spock's back disappear through them. She nodded her thanks and set off that way herself.

As soon as the large door swished shut behind her, the cacophony of voices within fell silent.

"Okay, how exactly are you involved with this mess, Christine?" Kirk asked into the stillness.

"Well, you see, Captain, Dr. McCoy received a message from - "

"Wait just a damned second!" McCoy interrupted. "You read it?"

"You shoved it into my hands, Bones, and ran off. What the hell did you expect me to do with it?"

"I - "

"As much as I hate to interrupt this domestic squabble," Kirk interrupted with a smirk, "but would someone please explain to me just what the hell is going on?"

Christine turned to McCoy with raised eyebrows. "Do you want to explain or shall I?"

McCoy threw up his hands, grabbed one of the shot glasses from the desk and slumped into a chair. "Fine. Go ahead. Since you run the rest of my life anyway."

Christine put one hand lightly on his shoulder. He tensed briefly, but when she did not remove her hand, he relaxed into her touch. She kept it there, gently rubbing his shoulder and neck, even as she spoke.

"Dr. McCoy just received a message from the head of the medical facility on the Cerberus colony, where his daughter Joanna is attending school. It seems that Joanna has developed Aplastic Anemia. While this would not ordinarily be a major cause for alarm - it is an eminently treatable condition, even for a small medical facility like the one on Cerberus - there are additional complications. You see, Joanna is rejecting - "

"In Standard, Chris," Kirk interrupted with a rueful smile.

"Basically, Joanna needs a lot of blood and probably a bone marrow transplant as well - her body just isn't producing enough red blood cells by itself right now. Unfortunately, she is one of the very small percentage of people who reject synthesized blood. Her body sees it as a foreign invader and attacks it."

"So she needs real blood and real bone marrow, transplanted from another human?" Kirk guessed. "Even in a small colony like Cerberus, that shouldn't be that hard to find, right?"

"That's what I would have thought, too," Christine agreed. "But the message seems to indicate otherwise. I was trying to figure out why, when I thought I remembered something. So on my way up here, I took a look at Joanna's file and - "

"You are aware, Nurse Chapel," Spock interrupted, "that the medical records for family members of serving officers are restricted access for anyone below the rank of Commander? Strictly speaking, you should not have been able to access Miss McCoy's file."

Christine met his raised eyebrow with one of her own, silently asking, *So what's your point?* Spock inclined his head in acknowledgement.

McCoy made a face. "Remind me to get Scotty to change all of Gaila access codes, for teaching you to do that," he grumbled.

Kirk coughed uncomfortably. "Actually, I did."

"You *what*?" Uhura said, giving the captain an icy glare.

He shrugged and then grinned unapologetically. "She taught me how to make killer chocolate chip cookies; I taught her how to hack into some of the databases. I thought it was a fair trade. We all know that Bones was never going to do his own paperwork anyway."

"*ANYway*," Christine said, desperately trying to drag the conversation back onto topic. "What I discovered is that Joanna's blood type is B-, which is one of the least common blood types. Less than 2% of the entire human population in the galaxy would be a potential donor. It is entirely possible that there simply isn't anyone on the colony who is a healthy match."

Uhura's face scrunched up in concentration. "But wait a minute. It's been a long time since I took biology, but don't I remember that one of the blood types is a universal donor - that everyone can accept it."

"Yeah, O-," McCoy said quietly, in a distant voice. "But if Jo - if Jo ever wants to have kids, she needs the exact match. I'm not going to ask my 13 year old daughter to decide now if she ever wants to be a mommy."

Christine put the PADD down on the desk and began rubbing McCoy's shoulders with both hands, trying to soothe away the tension. "For some women, getting a blood transfusion with blood that is an okay, but not perfect match, puts their body on high alert," Christine explained. "Her body might accept the blood now, but if she ever got pregnant, it is highly likely that her body would see the baby's blood as 'foreign', and reject it - aborting the fetus. There are ways to try to inoculate against that, but given that Joanna has already rejected the synthesized blood, the odds aren't good. And besides," she added as an afterthought, "if Jo does need a marrow transplant, it has to be an exact match anyway."

There was a moment of profound silence in the ready room as everyone processed the information.

"So what can we do?" Kirk asked quietly.

"There's nothing anyone can do," McCoy started to say, but another voice overlapped his.

"Get us there as fast as possible," Christine said.

Kirk looked surprised. "We could get to Cerberus in -"

"Two point one-five days, at warp six," Spock supplied.

"- but what good would that do, Chris? If this blood type is as rare as you say it is, there might not be anyone on board the *Enterprise* who is a match either."

Christine took a deep breath. "I am," she said. "I'm B-, and I meet all the other criteria too. That's what I was checking in the database. I'm as close to a perfect donor for Joanna as you're likely to find. I can do the transfusion and even the bone marrow transplant, if she needs it."

"No!" McCoy exploded, spinning around in the chair to face her. "Thank you, Chris, but I can't let you do that. We'll - we'll find another way."

"What other way, Doctor?" Spock asked. "The *Enterprise* can take us to Cerberus without any significant interruption to our mission - we are 'in the neighborhood', as it were. And I have no doubt that Christine's research, unauthorized though it might have been, is accurate. While I'm sure we would all like to run some tests to confirm her hypothesis, I am confident that she will, indeed, prove to be a suitable match for your daughter."

McCoy made noises of disagreement, and Christine crouched down in front of him, and took his hands in her own. "Why are you so against this, Len?"

"I - I can't - I don't -" He snapped his mouth shut and took a shaky breath. "I'm already faced with the possibility of losing my daughter, Chris. Don't make me add losing you to that as well. I wouldn't survive," he whispered.

"You're not going to lose either of us," she said fiercely, trying to ignore the fact that there were three other people in the room. This was a conversation that really ought to have taken place in private, but she wasn't sure she had that luxury. "The risk to me is minimal - I'm perfectly healthy, so handing over a few pints of blood and some marrow isn't going to do me any harm. And if I'm as good a match for Joanna as I think I am, the risk to her will be as small as it can possibly get. We can run the tests and have Spock and M'Benga look over the results, if you want."

"But why?" he asked, clearly bewildered. "Why are you doing this for Jo? You've never even met her."

"Because she's your daughter. That's good enough for me." She brushed her knuckles along his cheek, and drew her breath in sharply when he caught her hand and brought it to his lips.

"Mr. Spock, please set a course for the Cerberus colony, warp six, and tell Starfleet we are detouring for a few days. Tell them that we have a . . . family matter to attend to," Kirk said into the silence that followed.

Two days later, Christine entered the transporter room to find McCoy already standing on the pad, and Kirk at the controls. The tests they had performed had proven her initial thought - she was about as good a match for Joanna as they were likely to find on short notice. Or any notice, for that matter. Christine had done her best to project a calm, confident demeanor, knowing that any sign of doubt might send the already-nervous doctor over the edge. Now that the time was at hand, though, she was hard-pressed to ignore the butterflies in her stomach.

Kirk came over to her and put his hands on her shoulders. It always amazed her how much he had grown up from the cocky cadet with a chip on his shoulder that she had first met.

"Hey," he said. "Smile for me." Almost against her will, the corners of her mouth twitched. "There we go. It'll be *fine*, Chris. We've double and triple checked the test results. Do you really think Bones would let anything happen to his two favorite women, if he wasn't sure about it? Now get going, so you can come back and I can get started on the merciless teasing."

She gave him a puzzled look.

He kissed her cheek and gave her a light shove towards the pad. "You didn't really think I was going to let this go, did you? It only took a critical illness to make the two of you realize what the rest of us have seen for *years*! When Jo gets better, she and I are going to tease the living daylights out of the two of you! Now get, going. My niece needs healing."

Christine shook her head in amusement and stepped up to the transporter pad. Shyly she reached out and took McCoy's hand. He gave it a squeeze, but did not let go. "Alright, Jim," he said, ignoring Kirk's triumphant grin. "Make this contraption go."

The last thing Christine was aware of as the transporter kicked into action was the way her hand fit into his. She held on tightly, never intending to let go. Teasing captains or not.

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