

## Taking Control

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## Taking Control

by [VelvetMouse](#)

### Summary

One man's loss is another man's gain

### Notes

Chronologically, this takes place immediately after section III in Lady-like.

The swish of the infirmary door caused Dr. Leonard McCoy to look up from his desk. It was almost the end of his shift, approaching midnight, and considering the Academy was in the middle of the fall term's finals, the evening had been as quiet as he had expected. Rather than the cadet red he expected to see, the form entering the infirmary was clad in street clothes. He caught a glimpse of a familiarly messy blonde ponytail disappearing into the break room.

"Chapel?" he called out in confusion, following the figure. "I didn't think you were scheduled to work tonight?"

"I'm not," she replied shortly, and he heard a loud thump from the room. When he reached the doorway he saw Nurse Christine Chapel sprawled out on one of the couches, her eyes closed and a hand pinching the bridge of her nose. That was a move he had seen many times on shift and it usually meant that she had an impending headache from dealing with large amounts of stupidity. There was a large duffle bag on the floor at her feet, the source, he assumed, of the thump.

McCoy did a quick about-face to grab a hypo of painkiller from the supply closet. He knew from experience that once one of Chapel's headaches got going, there was little that even 23rd century medicine could do.

He pressed the hypo into her hand and did a double take as she injected herself.

"Jesus, Chris, you look like shit," he blurted out. "What happened to you?" Chapel's eyes were red-rimmed and bloodshot, as if she had been crying, and she had a tight, pinched expression that he had last seen when the *Enterprise* was a few minutes away from being blown to the far ends of the universe.

She gave him a wry glance and for a moment he thought she wouldn't answer. "It's Roger," she said quietly.

McCoy hissed. "What'd that bastard do to you? I'll kill him." If there were any traits that rubbed Leonard McCoy the wrong way, they were a smug arrogance and the refusal to believe that anyone else could possibly be an expert in any field related to medicine. And, based on the few times he had met the man, Roger Korby had both in abundance. Not that he would ever say that to Chapel's face. He had been raised better than that. But he sure as hell would think it.

Chapel snagged his sleeve before he could storm out the door and do irreparable harm to her ex-fiancé. "No, Bones. Don't. It wasn't him - that is - " She swallowed hard. "I walked out on him," she said just above a whisper.

McCoy couldn't stop his jaw from dropping, but he recovered quickly enough and pulled one of the chairs over to the couch.

"Start at the beginning, Chris, and tell me what happened. He didn't hit you did he?"

"No, no, no! Nothing like that. It's just that ever since - ever since the *Enterprise*," she replied thickly, "Roger has been after me to quit Starfleet. Even though he's going off to do an excavation on some planet I've never heard of, he doesn't want me in space. He claims it'll

distract him from his work if he always has to worry about me. He wants me to quit and wait at home like a good little girl. My career doesn't have any meaning, you know. I'm *only* a nurse. Never mind that I'm most of the way through a combined MD and PhD program. I think he just doesn't want me to be more qualified than he is."

McCoy reached over and grabbed one of Christine's hands, preventing her from piercing her palm with her nails. She calmed and gave him a slight smile before continuing.

"He tried to insist again tonight, and I finally couldn't take it anymore. I left the ring on the coffee table, threw as much stuff into my duffle as I could and just got out of there. It was either that, or deck him."

McCoy's laughter bounced off the infirmary walls. "Oh I would have loved to see that, darlin'." Then he sobered. "What are you going to do now, Chris?"

Chapel shrugged. "I figured I'd crash here for a couple days until the term ended and then see about finding a place of my own. This couch is comfortable enough, and there are showers and a coffeemaker. What more do I need?"

McCoy looked unconvinced, but did not comment. Instead, he rose and started to head back out to the desk where he had been working. Then he paused and turned back to Chapel.

"Go get cleaned up, Chris. I'm almost done here, and then you're coming with me to get something to eat. I know you, Christine Chapel," he overrode her when she started to protest. "I'll bet Jim's new dress uniform that you haven't eaten anything since lunch. You're coming with me and at least having a milkshake. Doctor's orders."

10 minutes later, a much calmer and more collected Christine Chapel found McCoy handing over the log PADD to the next doctor on duty. She gave a friendly wave, but resolutely ignored the curious glances that the incoming doctor and nurses were sending her way.

"Bones, what are you doing?" she asked in confusion as McCoy picked up her duffle bag and headed for the door.

"Did you really think I was going to let you crash here?" he asked with a scowl. "Now that the brass has finally seen fit to give me my own damned apartment, I've got plenty of room. And I have been reliably informed by Jim that my couch is better than any of the dorm beds."

Christine chuckled despite herself. "Didn't they give Jim an apartment, too? After all, can't have the once-and-future captain of the *Enterprise* living in a dorm, now can we?"

"They did, but do you really think he spends many nights there? He claims my place is closer to the good bars. I think he got Gaila to hack my security code, because I sure as hell don't remember giving it to him. Just found him on my couch one morning about a month after we got back. He's been there at least once a week ever since."

"Oh, so I'm going to have to share my crash space, huh? Such a generous offer, Bones."

"Nah, I'll just change the code when we get in tonight. It usually takes him a few days to figure out the new ones. And by that time you can tell him exactly how long he needs to stay away."

Christine's laughter rang across the quiet campus, and she suddenly felt like something within her that had been broken was slowly starting to heal itself again.

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