

Tea and Sympathy

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Tea and Sympathy

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Summary

Kirk gets sick and Spock helps.

Notes

Written for Grayswandir in the 2022 Hurt/Comfort exchange. Originally posted on AO3.

Kirk leans forward to move his bishop, forcing himself not to grimace as another cramp grips his stomach. If he's honest, he hasn't been feeling great all day, but he and Spock have had so little time to spend together recently that he isn't about to cut their chess game short over a stomach ache.

He thought he was doing a pretty good job of hiding his discomfort, so he's caught off guard when Spock pauses in the act of taking one of his pawns and asks, "Are you well, Jim?"

"I'm fine," Kirk tells him, perhaps a little too quickly to be casual. Spock raises an eyebrow, and Kirk sighs. "My stomach just hurts a little."

Spock tilts his head in thought. "Would you like some tea? There is a Vulcan blend that I've found helps in such circumstances."

Kirk smiles in spite of himself. "That would be nice. Thank you."

Spock stands and moves to the other side of his quarters, returning a few minutes later with two cups of tea. He sets one in front of Kirk and slips back into the seat opposite, holding his cup in both hands.

Kirk lifts the cup to his mouth and takes a cautious sip. The flavour is interesting; almost earthy, with a hint of spice. Unlike anything he's ever had before, but not unpleasant.

He isn't sure it's doing anything to his stomach, but he takes another sip anyway. "So," he says. "Do Vulcans often suffer from stomach aches?"

"Not often," Spock replies. "Though Doctor McCoy's attentions have ensured I experience them more than the average."

Kirk laughs, and Spock's lips curve a little as he takes a sip of his tea. He's never understood why people seem to think Spock is emotionless when in Kirk's experience he's just as capable of being funny and kind and warm as anyone else. More, in some cases.

The tea helps a little, but his stomach continues to cramp as they continue with their game, grumbling and churning with nausea. He manages to battle Spock to a narrow loss, but he knows it was far from the best game he's ever played.

"Guess I'll turn in," he says as he stands up and pushes the chair in. "Hopefully things will calm down enough for us to play again soon."

"Indeed," Spock replies. "Good night, Jim. Feel better."

Kirk smiles, warmed by the concern in Spock's tone, before he turns and heads back through the bathroom to his quarters. Hopefully he'll feel better after some sleep.

Unfortunately, that doesn't prove to be the case. He downs a couple of painkillers before going to bed, but he still wakes up in the middle of

the night with his stomach cramping painfully, nausea creeping up his throat. He lies still, hoping that his stomach will settle down, but finally realises he's going to have to get up and deal with the situation.

He breathes slowly and carefully as he sits up, but the motion still sends his stomach sloshing, his nausea becoming critical. He hurries into the bathroom and drops to his knees in front of the toilet, saliva already pooling in his mouth. His stomach lurches once, then again, and he clutches as the sides of the toilet as he vomits miserably into the bowl.

He feels a little better afterwards, but his stomach is still cramping unpleasantly. He rises to rinse out his mouth at the sink, then pours himself a glass of water and downs another couple of painkillers before heading back to bed.

He manages to doze for about half an hour before he ends up back in front of the toilet. He doesn't know what he ate to cause this, but he really wishes he hadn't. At least, he hopes it was something he ate, because the alternative is that this is something contagious and the last thing he wants is it spreading through the crew.

He's rinsing his mouth out at the sink again when the door to Spock's quarters opens to reveal Spock, barefoot and dressed in a meditation robe. He blinks at Kirk in concern. "Jim? Are you well?"

Kirk manages a weak smile in response. "My stomach's still bothering me. I didn't mean to wake you."

"You didn't," Spock tells him. "I was not asleep."

Sometimes Kirk envies Spock the Vulcan ability to function on a few hours of sleep a night, but right now he'd give anything to be able to go to bed and just sleep without his stomach waking him up.

"Well, I'm fine," Kirk says. "You don't need to worry."

Spock opens his mouth, probably to say something about how Vulcans don't worry, but Kirk's stomach chooses that moment to rebel again, sending him lunging for the toilet.

He's a little surprised he has anything left by now, but it's determined to come up anyway. He retches painfully, feeling sweat soak through the back of his pyjama shirt. This isn't how he wanted Spock to see him, but if there's one thing he's learned over his time in Starfleet, it's that they rarely get what they want.

He half-expected Spock to leave, but he's waiting at Kirk's side as he sits back, handing him a glass of water to rinse his mouth and a damp washcloth to wipe his face. "Thanks," Kirk tells him with a wan smile. "Sorry you had to see me like this."

"Do not concern yourself," Spock replies. "You are ill." He frowns, then adds, "Would you like me to contact sickbay?"

Kirk shakes his head, one hand rubbing at his aching stomach. "There's no reason to bother them in the middle of the night. It's probably just something I ate."

"All the more reason to inform them," Spock says.

"And I will," Kirk replies. "In the morning." He rubs a hand over his eyes and adds, "Right now I'd rather just go back to bed. Not that I expect to get much sleep."

Spock helps him up and he makes his way back into his quarters and climbs into bed. Spock disappears back into the bathroom and Kirk assumes he's gone back to his quarters. He's surprised when Spock returns a few minutes later with a cup and a square of fabric.

He sets the cup down on Kirk's bedside table and hands him the fabric square. It's heavier than Kirk was expecting, and warm to the touch. "A heating pad?"

"I thought it might make you feel more comfortable," Spock tells him, and Kirk feels warmth spread through his chest, touched by Spock's thoughtfulness.

"Thank you," he says. He places the heating pad over his stomach, finding that it does seem to help a little.

Spock hovers by his bedside as he settles into the blankets. "I do not plan to sleep tonight," he says, "so you should feel free to contact me if you need anything."

"I'll keep that in mind," Kirk tells him. If he has to feel like this, at least he isn't alone. "Thank you, Spock."

He hopes Spock knows how much he appreciates his actions, but from the affection in his eyes as he says, "You are welcome, Jim," he thinks he does.

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