

The Sound of Integrity

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The Sound of Integrity

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Summary

When the dust settles after stealing the Romulan cloaking device, it must be acknowledged: although it was logical, they left the second officer in a terrible position.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

It was some time before Spock could relieve Mr. Scott. The Captain's face was being returned to human, and Spock needed to monitor their Romulan guest and make an encrypted report to Starfleet. He had not previously calculated the odds, but now that they had procured the cloaking device and escaped, he quietly acknowledged they had not been favorable.

Scott glanced up when Spock arrived on the Bridge, and stood crisply to relinquish the center seat. "All quiet, Mr. Spock. I'm told the Captain is back t' himself."

"A net loss for the aesthetics of the crew," Spock said, getting the precise huff of amusement he had anticipated.

"If you and the Captain don't need me, I may turn in. I'd already been on duty three shifts before we crossed th' neutral zone."

Spock could see the weariness in him, not just from today, but from what this mission was doing to the Chief Engineer. In the last months, his look had changed. Harder, more angular. Faded, perhaps, at the edges. More angry, certainly—and he was *very* angry today, although hiding it well.

"May I walk with you?" Spock asked, getting a surprised lift of eyebrows from the engineer.

"Aye," Scott said with a shrug, and the men stepped onto the lift, which Spock halted almost immediately.

"You shall be receiving a commendation," Spock said. "A highly classified one, but you shall be receiving one."

"Not necessary," Scott said swiftly.

"Nevertheless," Spock answered. "Your actions were exemplary under critical conditions in which you did not possess all the information."

"Not for the first time," Scott said, and *there* was the anger.

"One of the key factors in our success. The Captain and I considered telling you. Ultimately, upon my recommendation, we did not." Scott pressed his lips together, and Spock knew that further explanation was necessary.

"This could have ended four ways," Spock continued. "The first was our success, where your foreknowledge was unnecessary. We knew could trust your skill, both as the commander of this ship and as an engineer in the installation of the cloaking device." Scott smiled ruefully at the compliment. "In the second and third scenarios, we failed, and you either fought your way out or destroyed the ship."

"And neither one o' those needed me to know th' truth," Scott summarized with a sigh.

"Precisely. In the fourth scenario, however, ship and crew were captured. The Captain and I would have been dead before we could be questioned—that contingency was provided for—leaving you alone to answer for everything. You would have been subject to immediate and brutal interrogation. In stating that you would not have the capacity to withstand it, I do not insult your courage—merely note your lack of telepathic defenses."

Scott nodded. "And if I knew, that was war," he agreed heavily.

"Yes," Spock agreed. "But also your execution by torture. Withholding the truth from you would have permitted them to discover only your fury at Captain Kirk and your certainty that he is capable of rogue behavior."

"Mr. Spock ..." Scott started to protest.

"Your loyalty is unshakable, as more than proved today," Spock said. "However, your personal relationship with Captain Kirk has not always been smooth. Had this been Captain Pike, you would never have accepted that he had gone rogue, and they would have known that. Captain Kirk, however ..."

"Alright, point made," Scott said, a bit grumpily.

Spock did not begrudge the engineer his irritation, and continued. "Without a conspiracy, the Romulans would have been left with the actions of a good soldier who fought with honor. Although it is unlikely that you would have been particularly *well* following Romulan questioning, it may have been possible for the Federation to disavow Captain Kirk and negotiate your release."

Spock started the lift again and let the silence sit.

"It's logical, Mr. Spock," Scott said when the lift stopped.

"Yes," Spock agreed, and then looked at his colleague of these many years. "Nevertheless, I regret placing you in that position."

"'Twasn't you, Mr. Spock, but Starfleet. Thank ye for protectin' me. Goodnight, sir," the engineer answered, and Spock watched him walk away slowly until the doors closed again.

End Notes

For his "fuck around and find out" speech, surrounded by Romulan ships in Romulan space, Scotty wins the BAMF Award of this episode. But oh, was he pissed.

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