

Improvisation

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Improvisation

by [SLWalker](#)

Summary

(2249) - Sometimes you have to pull your adopted sibling out of the metaphorical darkness, sometimes the literal. (And sometimes both.)

Notes

Part of what will someday be a longer tale. (I know, I say that a lot.)

"m sorry I snapped at ye."

The words were muffled by blankets and came out of the dark hollow of Scotty's bunk; really, the atmosphere was a little too on the nose for Corry's tastes. Which was part of the reason he was back now: To do something about it.

"It's okay," Cor said, because he'd forgiven it instantly. Even when Scotty *was* in his right mind, Corry wouldn't have taken it to heart, but with Scotty in this kind of state, it was especially easy to let it roll off of his back. There was no meanness in anything but tone. And it said something about his brother, Cor thought, that despite his neurochemistry being wrecked in truly scary ways, he wasn't aiming to wound, just to be left alone.

Not that leaving him alone right now was a good idea, for more than a couple hours at a time. Which was still a notable improvement. At least Corry wasn't worrying about Scotty trying to airlock himself now, just-- worrying about *everything else*. Apparently in a manner that was inevitable when your brother became an accidental avatar for a gigantic sentient fungal network, anyway.

Cor sat on the edge of the bunk and scritchd at Scotty's blanket-clad shoulder. "Anyway, I've got a plan to make you feel better, so please come out of your cave."

Despite the apology, Scotty tried to swat him away, but only successfully tangled himself in one of the blankets he was curled up under. After a sound of frustration, he shoved the blankets off his head, but then winced away from the scant light in their quarters.

He looked awful, but the detailed neuro-psych scan earlier showed his neurotransmitters were coming back up from the nerve-wracking *rock bottom* they'd been on, so probably that would be a time-limited thing.

Leaving him to hide in the dark the past few days had been a concession to the fact that Scotty was-- well, *Scotty*. As many times as Corry'd had to deal with Scotty in some wounded state, he'd gotten good at navigating his brother's defenses, learning how to leverage his ability to push Scotty into accepting help without actually stumbling through any tripwires. Sometimes that meant letting Scotty hole up, but now Cor judged that it was time to drag him out into the light.

Literally.

"If ye're gonna stare at me like I'm about to dissolve or jump out an airlock--" Scotty started now, defensive and hurting.

"Sorry," Corry said, sincerely. "But I've spent the afternoon making arrangements and you jumping out an airlock would put a serious snarl in those." The fact that the dry gallows humor didn't even get a hint of a sardonic grin made Cor's heart ache, but he went on without letting it get hooks in, "So, the plan is to throw you into a hot bath in a modified specimen preservation tank with custom-rigged jets down in Lab 2, using

the combined, donated water rations of a full quarter of the Science Division, and point some Sol-lamps at you. And then, while you marinate and hopefully start feeling better, I'm going to make you some lemon-ginger tea and go collect on the real chicken-noodle soup the Chef owes me for favors undisclosed."

If seeing Scotty this wrecked was hard, seeing the fragile surprise and gratitude at someone trying to take care of him on his face was a specific kind of devastating Cor was well familiar with. So, before Scotty could go opening his mouth to protest (because he would), Cor stole away the pile of blankets and then held out a hand. "C'mon, I've already got your moose pajamas and sunglasses down there. We even figured out a way to heat towels. It'll be the first spa treatment ever pulled off on a rickety old *Oberth*-class science ship, so we're even making history. Again."

Normally, that would have gotten some banter. Or push-back. But Cor wasn't too surprised when instead he just ended up with his brother crying into his shoulder, the first time Scotty had fallen apart since that whole ordeal ended.

He just held on back; the improvised spa could wait a little longer.

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