

Proximity

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Summary

Pike invites Ash on a tour of the Enterprise. Or at least that's the plan.

Notes

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"Anywhere in particular you want to start?" Pike asks, as they exit the transporter room and head towards the nearest turbolift.

Ash shrugs. He's a little interested to see how the *Enterprise* compares to *Discovery*, or the *Yeager*, but if he's honest he's mostly just here as an escape. Rebuilding Section 31 is an important job, he knows that, but it's also exhausting, and he desperately needs some time free from reports and red tape and responsibility.

(He'll get back to it tomorrow, he will. He just needs a break.)

"Just give me the tour," he suggests, and Pike studies him for a moment before nodding.

"Guess we'll start at the top," he says as they step into the turbolift, before grabbing one of the handles on the wall. "Bridge."

Ash steadies himself as the lift begins to rise. The *Enterprise* is older than *Discovery*, and while it's in excellent condition it shows in the styling, the way everything's just a little bit less polished.

He kind of likes that.

"So," Pike begins, but before he can continue the lift jerks to a halt, sending them both flying against the wall. Pain shoots through Ash's head as the lights flicker and go out, replaced by the blue glow of emergency lighting.

"You okay?" Pike asks, as he clambers to his feet.

"Yeah," Ash grunts, though his head is still aching.

He rises slowly, fighting against a wave of dizziness as Pike crosses the few strides to the intercom. "Pike to Louvier, report."

No response.

"Pike to bridge."

Still nothing.

Pike fiddles with the buttons for a few seconds before giving up and running his hands through his hair. "Great," he mutters, then raises his voice and adds, "Computer, location of Turbolift Three?"

"Turbolift Three is between decks four and five. Malfunction detected."

"Repairs are going well then?" Ash can't help but comment, and Pike turns to him with an expression somewhere between annoyed and

amused.

It quickly changes to one of concern, though, and he takes a few quick steps closer, gaze focused on the side of Ash's head. "You're bleeding."

Ash reaches up, touching the sore spot above his ear. The hair there is wet, and when he pulls his hand down his fingers are tinged with red.

"Hit my head when I fell," he says. "It's fine." It isn't like he hasn't had worse, after all.

Pike ignores him, stripping off his uniform shirt and folding it into a rough square. "Here," he says, pressing it against Ash's head. "Put pressure on it."

Ash does so.

Pike studies him for a moment, frowning. "I hope you don't have a concussion," he says. "Do you have any blurred vision or nausea or anything like that?"

Ash shakes his head and immediately wishes he hadn't. "Any idea how we're going to get out of here?" he asks, trying to take the attention off himself.

"Engineering will know there's a problem," Pike tells him. "We just have to wait for them to fix it."

"And how long is that going to take?"

Pike doesn't answer. "You should sit down," he says instead.

"I'm fine," Ash replies, though he still feels a little dizzy. He finds his gaze drawn to Pike's chest, bare now after turning his uniform into a temporary bandage. He's in good shape, abs just starting to fade into softness, dark pink nipples standing out among a light covering of hair, and Ash looks away quickly before he can be caught staring.

This isn't the first time he's felt that faint pull of desire, but before now it's always been overshadowed by his feelings for Michael. Part of him still loves her - suspects he always will - but she's gone now, far beyond his reach, and Pike... isn't.

"Is it still bleeding?" Pike asks. "Let me take a look." He reaches out a hand and Ash catches it instinctively, holding it with the hand that isn't still pressing a shirt to his head.

He expects Pike to pull away, but he doesn't, just watches Ash carefully as if seeing what he's going to do next. Ash can name a million reasons this is a bad idea, but it doesn't stop him from leaning forwards, closing the short distance between them and pressing his lips against Pike's.

He swears Pike kisses back for a second, but then he's pulling away and taking a step backwards. "This isn't right," he says. "You're hurt."

"It's just a scratch!" Ash blurts in annoyance. "Or do you really think I need a head injury to be interested in you?"

Judging by Pike's expression, that might not actually be so far from the truth. Well, Ash thinks, at least he's not the only one with issues.

He takes a step forwards and Pike moves back, keeping him at arm's length. "This isn't right," he says again. "It's not... I'm not saying no. But I can't- not here. Not like this."

Ash considers that. "And when we get out of here?"

Pike still looks wary, but there's a definite hint of interest in his eyes. "I still owe you a tour, don't I? Maybe afterwards we can stop by my quarters. See where it takes us."

He smiles, brief but real, and Ash feels something loosen in his chest.

Yeah, he thinks. He can work with that.

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