

## Convalescence

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## Convalescence

by [lah\\_mrh](#)

### Summary

Jim's mom takes him with her to Vulcan, and Jim makes a new friend.

### Notes

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Jim stands at the window, looking out at the planet that will be his home for the next three months. Vulcan. It's red and dry and dusty, as different from Iowa as you can get.

He still can't quite believe he's here. He's never been off-planet before, not even to the Moon. His mom was always insistent on him and Sam staying safe on Earth.

Then again, he thinks, staying on Earth didn't stop him getting sick.

That's the real reason why they're here, after all. The supposed reason is that his mom got offered a position here, but he knows the only reason she took it is because of him, in the hope that the heat and dryness will be better for his recovery than suffering through winter in Riverside.

Part of him misses Sam, and his grandparents, but the rest of him is excited to explore this strange new world.

With that thought, he turns away from the window and grabs his PADD, heading out into the living room where his mom is unpacking photos and knick-knacks. "Can I go play outside?"

She pauses, turning to look at him. "Have you unpacked all your toys?"

"Most of them."

She nods slowly. "Okay. But wear your alert bracelet, and take some water. It's hot out there."

Jim grabs a bottle from the kitchen and is gone before she can change her mind. "Thanks, Mom!" he calls over his shoulder. "See you later!"

He makes it down to the ground floor without incident, but the moment he steps outside he's hit with a wave of heat. He makes a valiant effort to explore the area, despite the heat, but soon gives up in favour of sitting down in the shade and playing on his PADD.

He's halfway through a jigsaw puzzle when he hears raised voices. They seem to be coming from the other side of a nearby wall, and he abandons the puzzle in favour of finding out what's going on.

The wall is almost as tall as he is, but he manages to scramble up high enough to see the source of the noise. Three Vulcan boys in strange long robes are surrounding a fourth boy, who is curled in on himself defensively. Jim doesn't understand Vulcan well enough to tell what they're saying, but he's pretty sure they're insulting him.

Jim considers yelling at them, but he isn't sure he wants to get in the middle of a fight. He's trying to figure out what to do when a chime rings out and the three boys turn and hurry off, though not without a last shove to their victim.

"Hey," Jim says, when it's just him and the last boy left. "Are you okay?"

The boy startles, looking up at him. "I am fine," he replies in barely accented Standard. "And you should not be up there."

"Probably not," Jim agrees easily. "I'm Jim." He tries to wave, but ends up losing his grip on the wall and falling to the ground in a cloud of dust.

By the time he's managed to stop coughing and pick himself up, the other boy has come in through the gate and is standing beside him. "Are you injured?" he asks with a frown.

Jim shakes his head, stifling another cough. "Nah, I'm okay. What's your name, anyway?"

"Spock."

"Spock," Jim repeats, nodding. "I'm Jim."

"Yes," Spock replies. "You said that already."

Jim shrugs and continues, "I just moved here with my mom. She's upstairs unpacking." He gestures vaguely at the building. "Why were those guys being jerks to you?"

Spock blinks, apparently taken by surprise by the change in topic. For a moment Jim thinks he isn't going to answer, but then he says, "They believe me to be inferior because I am not fully Vulcan."

"You're not?" Jim asks in surprise. He didn't know that was possible.

Spock shakes his head. "My mother is human."

"Really?"

Spock nods, and Jim breaks out in a grin. "That is so cool."

"You think so?"

"Well, yeah! I'd love to be part alien." Jim raises his hand to cover another cough and scowls as he realises the light on his bracelet has turned orange. "Aw, come on, *again*? I can't do anything fun."

He stalks back into the shade and flops down, grabbing his water bottle. Spock follows.

"That is a medical bracelet," he notes. "Are you unwell?"

"No," Jim replies. "I mean, I was. I was in the hospital for like two weeks, but I'm okay now. I just have to rest a lot." He covers his eyes, squinting up at Spock. "That's kind of why we're here, actually. Mom thought the heat would be good for me."

He pats the ground beside him, and Spock sits down gingerly, crossing his legs. "What was wrong with you?"

Jim scratches his head. "Some alien virus. I can't remember the name, but it messed up my lungs so I couldn't breathe right."

"But you are recovered now?"

"Yeah, mostly. They gave me an inhaler, but I hardly ever need to take it anymore. Mom still worries a lot, though. I think she feels bad cause the doctors said she must have given it to me. They think she caught it on her last mission."

"Was she also unwell?"

"No. Well, a little. It's supposed to just make you sick for a few days, like the flu, but I always get sick worse cause of being born early."

Spock nods. "I also become ill more easily than my peers," he says.

"Cause you're part human?"

"Indeed."

Jim releases his breath in a rush, ruffling his hair. "Sucks, doesn't it?"

Spock raises an eyebrow at the words, but merely repeats, "Indeed."

"Jim? Jimmy!"

Jim sits up as his mom appears at the front door. He waves at her, and she hurries over. "There you are!" she says. Her gaze falls on Spock, and she smiles. "Making friends?"

"Uh huh," Jim says, nodding fervently. "This is Spock. Spock, this is my mom."

Spock stands up hastily, offering her a hesitant Vulcan salute. Jim tries to copy it, but can't manage to get his fingers in the right position. To his annoyance, his mom manages it easily.

"Hello, Spock," she says. "I'm Winona Kirk."

"Hello," Spock repeats.

She looks up at the building, then back to Spock. "I think it's about time Jimmy came inside, but you could come up for a snack or something? I mean, if your parents won't mind."

Spock glances at Jim, who nods excitedly. "My mother will be expecting me home," he says, and Jim deflates, pouting. He perks up again when Spock continues, "But... I could return tomorrow? I mean if you do not mind."

"Yeah, let's do that!" Jim says, bouncing up onto his knees. His mom laughs.

"I think that can be arranged," she tells Spock. "Why don't you give me your mom's number and we can organise a time for you two to get together."

Jim gives Spock his PADD so he can write down his information. When Spock hands it back, their fingers brush, and Jim feels something like electricity spark between them before Spock pulls his hand away. From the way Spock's eyes widen, Jim thinks he felt it too.

"I must go now," Spock says abruptly. "Farewell, Jim. Winona." He gives them another quick Vulcan salute, then turns to leave.

"Bye, Spock!" Jim yells after him, and Spock pauses briefly before continuing without looking back. Jim watches until he disappears out of sight.

"Come on," his mom says. "Let's get inside before you burn."

She begins heading for the door to the building, and Jim follows, his fingers still tingling strangely. Tomorrow suddenly feels like a very long way away.

\* \* \*

Amanda is working at the table when Spock comes home. She is well used to his habits by now, so she is surprised when he comes to speak to her rather than retreating to his room as he usually does.

He stops in front of her, clasps his hands behind his back, and says, "I wish to inform you that a woman named Winona Kirk is likely to call. She is the mother of a... friend."

A friend. She bites her tongue on the instinctive question and replies calmly, "I understand. I will speak with her."

He nods, then turns, making his way out of the room without another word. Amanda sits back in her chair, mind racing. *Winona Kirk, that's not a Vulcan name.* And she knows most of the outworlders out of necessity. A new arrival?

Still, she thinks, it scarcely matters. The important thing is that her son has a *friend*, and he isn't ashamed of it. After all he's been through in his life, he deserves that.

Not quite managing to hide her smile, she picks up her stylus and goes back to work.

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