

Second Chances

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Second Chances

by [Rae](#)

Summary

She had wanted better for Jim. She had wanted him to have what she had had with George.

Notes

Beta'd by the lovely [notboldly50295](#)

POV: Winona

Year 1 of 1.5 yr refit after 1st 5yr mission

T'Sai: 2 and 1/2 yrs old

Winona slowed her gait as the farmhouse came into view. The air was cool, raising the hair on her arms under her flannel. She hadn't thought to grab a jacket when she had made her escape nearly an hour ago. She had merely fled. She shoved her hands into the front pockets of her jeans and hunched into herself, more in shame at her actions than the chilly, spring air.

When Jim had called to arrange the visit, she had been ecstatic. She hadn't had to pester or nag him until he finally relented. Jim had been the one to reach out, to ask to see her and stay at the farm for a few days while he waited for Starfleet to arrange his teaching assignment while the *Enterprise* was undergoing its first official refit, the *actual* first refit being directly after Nero and all that entailed. She still didn't know the complete story, knew only that Vulcan was gone and George had finally been avenged.

It had been a bittersweet moment. Admiral Komack had contacted her in the aftermath to assure her that Jim was alive and that those responsible for destroying the *Kelvin* had been destroyed themselves. Jim hadn't called her until he was a captain, in space and recovering from his first sanctioned mission. The shiny, pink stretch of regenerated skin covering his neck and lower jaw clenched her stomach in a roiling mass of fear and worry. Jim was a captain. He was in space. He was going on missions. Her worst nightmare was, in fact, reality.

He had smiled and laughed, waving off her motherly concern with a smirk as he informed her that he understood her better now. His ship was his home, his crew his family and space his future. It broke her heart to hear those words come from her baby's lips. He didn't understand. He didn't know. And he was lost to her now. She would have no opportunity to atone for her actions in his youth, for leaving him for that merciless stretch of black her son now rushed toward.

Then, five years later, he called again.

It wasn't what she was expecting. She had expected her son to bound up her porch steps and inundate her with heroic tales of space travel. She expected stories of aliens, strange worlds, harrowing adventure and possibly, a tale or two about an intriguing woman. She had not expected her son to step onto her porch quietly, avoiding the squeaky second step in deference to the sleeping child held in his arms. She hadn't expected him to introduce her to his Vulcan bondmate, to suddenly be a grandmother or to realize with a rush of sadness that she had missed seeing her boy become a man.

She still heard all the stories, toned down so little ears could listen in, and Jim told her about a few intriguing women as well. There was Uhura and Chapel, only Jim spoke of them with affection and pride. There was a story about a Lieutenant Barrows and a rabbit that seemed to revolve around a man called Bones. She heard about Joanna and her attempt to mail herself to her father, who was apparently Jim's CMO and the owner of the aforementioned nickname. She heard about Scotty and his still, young Chekov and Jim's navigator, Hikaru Sulu. Jim's love for his people, his family, shone through the warmth in his eyes and the ever present smile on his face.

Which was the complete opposite of the emotionless blank stare etched across his husband's face. Spock. And that would be why she was currently stalking through barren fields, quickly moving from chilled to cold and dreading the point in time when she could no longer put off returning to the house. He seemed perfectly...*nice*? No. Pleasant wouldn't work either. He was cold, stand-offish, and he made her completely uncomfortable.

Had Jim introduced Spock as his friend, Winona would have been dubious. As husbands? Bondmates? No. Disbelieving is what she is. She wanted to ask. She wanted to know how they ended up together. Was it some botched alien ritual? Did they do it as a negotiation tactic during a first contact? Something had to have happened to force the bond. Aliens made them do it or something else just as horrific because it was improbable, no, impossible that Jim chose Spock of his own accord.

And they had a child. A biological child. Winona suppressed a shudder. T'Sai was adorable and the most lovely being Winona had ever laid eyes on. Yes, she loved her grandchild instantly. But the thought of Jim having to suffer through-

Winona kicked at a clump of wet leaves and sank down onto a stump. She had wanted better for Jim. She had wanted him to have what she had had with George. Instead, Jim was saddled with a robot. Even worse than Frank, she thought with another shiver as the wind picked up. Stubborn to the bone, she huddled into her shirt and leaned against her thighs to block the wind and conserve as much body heat as possible. She wasn't ready to return just yet.

It's not that Jim looked unhappy. In fact, he gave a very good impression of joy. She just couldn't put her faith in it. Jim had always been a good actor. And T'Sai was an exuberant bubble of mirth and curiosity. Her intelligence, no doubt, came from her Vulcan father. Not that Jim was unintelligent, he just wasn't Vulcan smart. The rest of T'Sai was pure Jim. Her infectious smile, her affectionate spirit and those warm eyes that shone as blue as her daddy's. It wasn't unreasonable for Winona to worry that her granddaughter's vivacious personality would one day be smothered under Vulcan control until it was a faded memory.

And perhaps Jim too would shine less brightly, be less *Jim* after years of Vulcan judgment pressing down on him. Winona would not have it. She stood quickly with newfound determination and stalked toward the house. Her house. George's house. She would force the truth out of Jim and they would find a way to fix things. Jim would have happiness and love in his life. He deserved no less.

Winona entered stealthily through the back door. She removed her mud-heavy boots and padded as quietly as she could toward the living room. She wanted to find Jim and draw him away without alerting Spock. She didn't think she could keep her doubts from spilling from her mouth if she had to look at that stern, unfeeling face for one more second.

She tiptoed down the hall and cautiously peered through the doorway to catch a glimpse of Jim. She found him right away, but he didn't hold her attention long. Her gaze drifted from his sleeping form sprawled out on the couch to the bodies lying on the floor instead. T'Sai and Spock lay on their stomachs, propped up on elbows, legs bent to allow hooked ankles to curve over their bodies. And they were coloring.

They attacked the coloring book, a leftover from Jim's childhood, from opposite sides. Spock, the picture of efficiency as he slowly and meticulously colored the crude drawing. T'Sai, on the other hand, gripped her fist around a pink crayon, chewed her lip in concentration, and scribbled in ever-widening circles.

It was an unexpected sight that grew ever more astounding the longer she observed from her half-hidden position. T'Sai pushed back from her page and tilted her head to the side before abandoning her pink crayon for a purple one. With a critical eye, Spock scanned the art-in-progress before pursing his stern lips.

"Is not pink an illogical color choice for an equine?"

Winona wanted to storm in and smack the air of superiority right out of him. She didn't. Instead, she clenched her fists and gritted her teeth, waiting for T'Sai to respond.

"Daddy says that there are more worlds than we can count with inhabitants that we couldn't ever imagine."

"Inhabitants. And I concede to your logic." T'Sai beamed up at her father before tackling the page with an orange crayon this time. "Your father and I once visited a planet with grass that exact shade of orange."

Wide blue eyes met his and silently begged for more details. Spock's mouth twitched in what might have passed for amusement before he continued.

"It was an uninhabited planet, which means it held no beings, sentient or otherwise. It was most aesthetically pleasing. The grass was waist high and stretched into the horizon. There were mountains in the southern hemisphere that appeared red when the sun set, yet were brown during daylight. And the moon glowed purple in the sky from a chemical reaction within the atmosphere. I believe, that your pink equine would be most pleased to live in such an environment. Your father called it a living rainbow and named the planet Crayola 64. I had not understood the reference until today."

"You brought me a picnic lunch on the second day and we slept under the stars. That was our one year anniversary, if I recall correctly."

Winona shot her gaze to Jim when he mumbled sleepily from the couch. His face radiated love and the sight made her heart ache. She turned to look at Spock and just stared. The transformation was stunning. Gone was the cool reserve and blank stoicism. What she saw instead mirrored Jim's own emotions. Love, affection, adoration flowed between them as they shared the memory. Spock lifted a hand toward Jim, two fingers extended and Jim didn't hesitate to meet them with two fingers of his own. And then Spock smiled. A soft, subtle upturn at the corner, but happiness streamed from it.

The moment shifted to include T'Sai when she requested they return to the planet and take her on a picnic. Then she asked what a picnic was and earned a chuckle from Jim. Winona couldn't take it anymore and ran from the house for the second time that day.

Jim found her huddled against the oak he fell from when he was five and earned his first three broken bones. He settled down next to her and draped the wool blanket from the foyer over their laps. She waited for him to say something, anything but he remained silent. She rested her head against the rough bark and shut her eyes to the moment she felt coming upon her. She had never been good at emotional moments, that had been George's specialty. Her eyes flew open when she felt Jim lay his head upon her shoulder and mumble into the heavy fleece of the jacket she had remembered her second time fleeing the house.

"What?"

Jim heaved a sigh and rolled his head against her to pin her with a tear-bright gaze.

"I'm sorry."

"What ever for?"

"For being so wrong about you for so long."

Winona shifted to get up but was trapped by a heavy arm settling across her waist.

"No. I need to say this. I'm sorry. I thought I understood why you left but I didn't. I couldn't. Not then. I get it now though. After Spock, normalcy wouldn't hold me either. If I lost him," Jim heaved a deep breath before continuing in a whisper meant only for her, "If I lost him, life would be too heavy. I would suffocate here under the weight of what used to be. I'd run too."

Winona felt years of repressed pain spear through her and swallowed thickly before reaching up to pat Jim's cheek in acknowledgement and ended up holding him there against her shoulder.

"Well, you were never that normal, Jim." She felt a huff of breath against her neck and turned to press a kiss against his brow. "I just couldn't heal here. That's all. I wasn't running from you or Sam. I was running from the hurt. I'm sorry."

"I understand."

They sat in silence as the sun began its slow descent across the horizon. It was nearly full dark before she felt strong enough to say what needed to be said.

"I'm happy for you, Jim."

"Me, too."

And what mother could ask for more?

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