

[See Chapter 1/title page for disclaimers and rating](#)

"Wake up Pixie, please wake up." Zack's voice echoed insistently through her head, forcing her to consciousness. A dream she thought, a horrible horrible dream. She was warm, and felt safe, despite not knowing where she was. Perhaps it was because of the lap her head was resting on, or the hand stroking her hair, both were familiar. A gentle hand curled around her own and Zack's voice transmitted itself to her once more. "It wasn't a dream. Wake up." Forcing her eyes open, T'Lin met the amused gaze of her brother. He was semi-clean and wearing an overly large tee-shirt, Starfleet issue. She noticed Aidan beside him, similarly dressed. *Safe then, with Daddy.* \*I can hear you again Pixie, and I know you can hear me. Something happened when you helped me and you were in my head again.\*

Though his lips didn't move, T'Lin heard her brother clearly. She also noticed the ache in her head was nearly gone, though her hands burned like fire. It dawned on her then why she had felt so safe, so secure. Her father was near, and she was almost normal again. She glanced up as the hand on her hair stilled. Her father's tired eyes met hers. "I was so afraid you wouldn't come to us Daddy. I kept trying to tell you we were alive, but you walked away."

Pain etched itself in the lines of his face for a moment before he relaxed. His hand resumed its stroking. "When I heard the T'Barro had been destroyed and all hands lost, I couldn't fathom it. I was being told that there was no possible way you could have survived, and yet I couldn't understand why I didn't feel as though you were gone. Your mother took it differently. She told me you were silent. That silence confirmed your loss to her and overwhelmed her. She nearly gave into it. I was so angry and confused." He gave her a half-smile, that didn't reach his eyes. "I thought you were haunting me. I kept seeing this ghost of you, could almost hear you. I thought I was hallucinating. Then your mother woke up and told me she'd had a dream of you. She said you had told her you were alive and that I needed her. I did. I didn't want to give her false hope, but I couldn't bear the thought of her leaving me again. That very night the Vulcans contacted us and told us they had found Soval. Later V'Lar was returned and she stated that she had seen you alive. When Soval woke, he confirmed he had seen you both as well. It was only a matter of time before we found you. I wouldn't have stopped until I knew for sure."

Trip turned in his seat. "We've got the docking arm extended. Just a few more minutes and we will all be home."

Jonathan helped his daughter sit up, watching as she studied the bandages on her hands. "You burned them somehow when you attacked the Satorian. We think it has something to do with the energy discharge."

Zack nodded. "You got him good this time Pix. He had scorch marks on his chest." He flashed her a grin. "Guess frying 'em like a fish works on Satorians too."

She tried not to flinch at the image. "I killed him then?" At Zack's nod, she continued. "Good. He deserved to die. Did I burn Zack too?"

Archer answered this time. "No. I checked him over real good once we got to the compound. Other than a nasty scar he seems to be fine."

"I don't know how..."

"It's alright baby. You have always been unique, able to do things we never thought of. It's a part of who you are."

"I'm a freak."

"No. You are the daughter of a Vulcan and a Human. The possibilities are endless."

"But," she gave a small shrug. "What if I killed someone with just a touch?"

Archer studied her for a moment. "I don't think you could or would. I think you were so angry, so afraid, that it burst out of you."

"I wanted to hurt him Dad. I wanted him dead so he couldn't hurt anyone ever again. I wanted to hurt him for Zack and Grace, and me."

"And so you did. I won't say its right to take a life, but I think you did what you had to do. I'm just sorry you had to do it, that we hadn't done it for you. I don't think you are a bad person. I don't think you have it in you to kill indiscriminately. I don't even know if you can do it again. The knowledge though will make you cautious."

"How could I kill Sorka and heal Zack? It's not something Humans or Vulcans can do? And... it just doesn't seem right somehow."

"It's not something I am familiar with in either culture, but perhaps a benefit of the blend. I honestly don't know Pixie. As for the rest... I think you are struggling with the morality of it. How can a person have the ability to both heal and kill?"

"Yes."

"It seems to me, that life and death are equally balanced. If you have the power to remove death, then it seems realistic that the power to give it would be equal."

Two sides of the same coin."

"I don't want to hurt anyone."

Archer hugged her to him. "I don't think you could, Pixie, not without just cause. I think the possibility of it will make you more aware and cautious." The ship shuddered as the docking arm connected. "Let's get you inside and cleaned up. You are safe now and home and your mother desperately wants to see you."

She nodded, allowing him to help her out of the shuttle and into decon.

T'Lin wiped at the steamy mirror, trying in vain to clear the image. The girl staring back at her looked as insubstantial as she felt, all blurry around the edges and not quite in focus. It was an odd feeling, as strange as being clean and warm. The little bathroom in decon was barely big enough to hold a grown man, but to a girl who had not had access to a bathroom, it was perfect. She took a deep breath of the warm, scented air. Awkwardly she pulled clean panties and the loose fitting undershirt. It was a man's A-shirt, and was too big, but it covered the essentials and was clean. She rested her hands on the edge of the sink and studied the misty face before her. It didn't look like her face anymore. She wiped again at the mirror and sighed. The hum of the ship vibrated under her fingers and for a second her vision blurred as fear skittered along her nerve endings. Clean, warm, safe, all words that for the longest time were only represented in dreams. She squinted at the mirror girl and could have sworn the creature smirked at her. What if this wasn't real? What if it were another twisted dream? Maybe she was still on that horrid planet? She shook her head, trying to free herself from the thoughts. Dreams and mist and death, they were all a part of her reality. A face seemed to form in the mist behind her, a shadow of the woman it had once belonged to. A chill shuddered through her and she clenched her hands around her arms. She didn't know what was real anymore, nothing seemed real and yet everything did. Where was the line? What did it define? Pain shot through her hands and she moved them in front of her. The bandages were damp from her shower. Her father had tried to help her protect them so she could bathe, but the moisture had seeped in. Her hands felt strange and heavy, sticky. As she studied them, they grew heavier, wetter. Her vision blurred slightly and then the white material changed, blossoming with an ever widening pattern of crimson. She froze in horror, staring helplessly as the blood swallowed her hands and arms, climbing up and over her body. She shuddered again and slowly sank to her knees.

A rapid thumping on the bathroom door pulled her from her imaginings. A quick glance at her hand showed damp white bandaging, no blood in sight. It was an uneasy feeling, knowing the waking world could be lost so easily, much as the

life she had known had been. Another thump on the door, and an impatient voice echoed through her head. \*Pixie! Are you done yet?\*

She smiled slightly and opened the door. As much as she wanted to, there was no point in lingering. Doctor Phlox wanted to scan them all and make sure they were okay. She nearly smiled as Zack snuggled against her. \*I'm okay, I was just thinking.\*

\*I was worried. I could feel you were scared.\*

She hugged him. \*Just forgot myself for a moment. I'm better now.\* She allowed him to hold onto her as she entered the main chamber.

Jonathan watched his children as they came away from the bathroom. They had always been close, but they seemed even closer. He wondered if they would share that bond with T'Mir and he felt his heart lighten at the thought that they would be able to. He wondered how they would feel about a new sister. As T'Lin turned to talk to Aidan, her shirt shifted over her back and the bile rose in his throat. Half-healed scars covered her back, at least what he could see of it. "Pixie, come here please."

She glanced over her shoulder at him curiously, but came to him, her brow furrowing as he turned her back to him once more. Catching the hem of her shirt, he lifted it, the breath sucking out of his lungs.

Zack peeked over his shoulder and patted his father's arm. "It looks better than it did. 'specially with the mud off it."

Jonathan could barely speak. Dropping the shirt, he turned his daughter to face him and drew her down into his lap. "What happened?"

She buried her face in his neck and closed her eyes. "I was disrespectful."

"Disrespectful?"

"Yeah. I overheard Vek and Sorka discussing Grandfather and Grandmother, and said something. Sorka started messing with me so I spit in his face."

Aidan had moved closer in the telling, his eyes solemn as they met Archer's. "She's lucky he didn't kill her. He probably would have if my mom hadn't tried to protect her."

"Is that how your mother died?"

Aidan shook his head. "Sorka shot her."

“Grace died protecting me, Daddy. She moved in front of the bullet meant for me. She was always trying to keep me away from Sorka. I wouldn’t listen.”

Jonathan didn’t know what to tell her, what comfort to offer. The children didn’t seem to expect any, at least not in words. They curled against him and each other, so he did the only thing he could think of, he held them, and rocked them, grateful just to have them near.

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T’Pol was walking down the corridor to the Tuckers’ quarters when it hit her. The knowledge that her children were home swept over her in a wave so strong it nearly forced her to her knees. She stumbled, barely keeping her feet, and leaned against the wall for support. Her babies were home, and safe. She would be able to see them soon, to hold them. The relief was so strong she nearly sobbed with joy. It was the whimpering of the baby that forced her to move. She straightened slowly, her hands coming up to support the infant carrier against her chest. Freeing the child, she studied her for a long moment, nearly smiling as T’Mir waved her little arms energetically. Unable to resist, T’Pol cuddled the child close, kissing her downy hair. The warmth, weight and sweet baby smell carried her back in time and she allowed herself to examine those cherished memories briefly. The baby, however, had other things in mind and demanded her mother’s attention with another round of waving fists and soft baby sounds. Cradling the baby close, she noticed both the similarities and the differences between this child and her others; each unique, each precious, and each ensnaring her completely with their existence. It was a humbling thought, that something so small, could so completely take over her life. It amazed her how each child, even her youngest could mean so much.

It was while she was caught in these thoughts that Hoshi found her. The younger woman smiled as she approached. “It won’t be much longer now and she’ll get to meet her siblings.”

Tears nearly filled her eyes as T’Pol glanced at Hoshi. “Not long at all. I wonder what they will think of her.”

“Considering how much they adore my brood, I imagine they’ll be thrilled. Are you going to pass over the little poppet and go greet your older children, or are you going to hold her all night?”

T’Pol glanced at the baby then back at Hoshi. “I am afraid. I do not wish to let her go, and yet, I can’t wait to hold them. I...”

Hoshi reached for T’Mir, smiling as the baby cooed at her. “You could take her with you, but I think it would be best to leave her with me for a bit. It will give you

a chance to spend some time with them.”

T’Pol relinquished the baby with a soft sigh. “It is always easier to face what you know. I am afraid I won’t know my children any longer.”

“You will know them. You have fought too hard to get them back not to. Besides, if you wait too long, the crew will beat you to them.” Hoshi placed the baby to her shoulder and ran soothing little circles on her back. “Charlie is so excited, she won’t go to bed. She overheard Trip and I talking over the comm about the children, and insists on waiting up for them. I don’t have the heart to tell her no. She would just wake the others with her fidgeting anyway.”

“Perhaps I should take her with me?”

Hoshi smiled again. “She can wait a little longer. You on the other hand need to head for sickbay. Your family is waiting.”

“Yes.” With one last touch to T’Mir’s back, she turned and headed for sickbay. The wait seemed long, and her calm was hard to hold, but she managed. And when the doors finally opened, she held on for dear life.

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Phlox insisted on additional scans before releasing them. With his typical joviality and humor, he ran more scans, treated wounds, and gave shots. He listened with a combination of pride and awe as they recounted some of their adventures, and sympathized with the Archers as T’Lin spoke of her menstrual cycle. While she talked he shared a look with the Captain. The paternal horror in the man’s eyes almost made him laugh. It seemed none of them wanted to face the ramifications of the children growing up.

Trip had stayed with them as the doctor ran his tests. To pass the time, he regaled them with stories of his new daughter. In essence it allowed Jonathan and T’Pol to just be near their children, to hold them and enjoy them without having to worry about conversation. He had waited until the exam was mostly over before starting though. The children were fascinated. ...”And there Charlie, baby drool and spit up all over the front of her jumper, total horror on her face. She looks down at Samantha, shakes her finger at her and calmly tells her she needs to learn some manners if she wants Charlie to continue holding her. What does Sam do? She spits up on her again. I thought I was going to die laughing.”

T’Lin gave him a half-smile. “She sounds wonderful Uncle Trip. I can’t wait to see her.”

Jonathan leaned toward her on the bio-bed. "Would you like a little sister?"

A wistful expression filled her eyes as she nodded. Zack bounced up and down beside her. "A little brother would be okay too, Dad."

Archer chuckled. The last of the tension in him eased a bit. "Well, I'm afraid you'll have to settle for a sister." Both children turned wide eyes on him and he grinned. "She's waiting at Trip's to meet you."

"We have a sister? Really?" T'Lin was awed.

"Yeah, really. Her name is T'Mir."

Zack clapped his hand on Aidan's back. "You hear that Aidan? We have a new sister."

T'Lin glanced at Aidan and then Jonathan. "A sister and a brother, whatever will you do with four of us?"

He studied her for a long moment and sighed. "Love you, what else?"

A chattering Charlie met them at the door to her quarters. Her father had barely opened the door when she came flying out, first launching herself at T'Lin, and then Zack. While she hugged, she talked a mile a minute. "Chef told me you were dead! Do you know what dead is? It means I would never see you again. How dare you go off and get dead. It made everyone sad and cry. I missed you horribly and I am so glad you aren't dead anymore. Don't ever leave me again!" The children were barely able to nod in response to the non-stop words. Charlie paused for breath as her hand curled in Zack's. Her eyes lit on Aidan and she grinned. Tugging on Zack's hand, she asked, "Who's he?"

T'Lin answered, her eyes on her mother's. "He's my brother, Aidan."

"Another brother? Awesome. I wouldn't mind a brother." Charlie marched up to the startled boy and threw her arms around his waist, hugging for all she was worth. "Welcome to Enterprise Aidan."

The boy looked down into the dark, flashing eyes and mischievous face and felt his heart skip a beat. "Thank you," he said as he hugged her back.

As they were ushered inside, the chatter stopped. T'Pol walked over to the sofa where T'Mir lay. Holding her close, she introduced her to the children. They all cooed over her, T'Lin especially.

T'Pol picked up the baby. "Do you want to hold her?"

T'Lin nodded eagerly and accepted the baby, cradling her carefully to her chest. She was awed by the little face and bright eyes that seemed to smile up at her. She raised a hand, making sure the baby was secure first, and gently stroked the tips of her fingers over T'Mir's silky hair, smiling as the springy curls bounced back into shape after each stroke. "Isn't she beautiful?"

Charlie, who had leaned over her arm to get a better look, wrinkled her nose. "She's pretty 'nuff I guess. Don't know what you're all excited for. She's just a sister. I have plenty of 'em."

T'Lin couldn't tear her gaze away. "I know. But T'Mir is mine."

\*Ours too Pixie.\*

\*Yes, all of ours. We can't let anyone hurt her Zack. She needs us to protect her. I won't let her down, not like I did you.\*

\*We won't let her down, Pix, ever.\*

Her eyes locked with his as his hand came down over the baby's heart. Aidan shifted in the corner of her eye as he too seemed to take a protective stance. His hand hovered briefly over Zack's. T'Lin spoke softly. "Yes, we."

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